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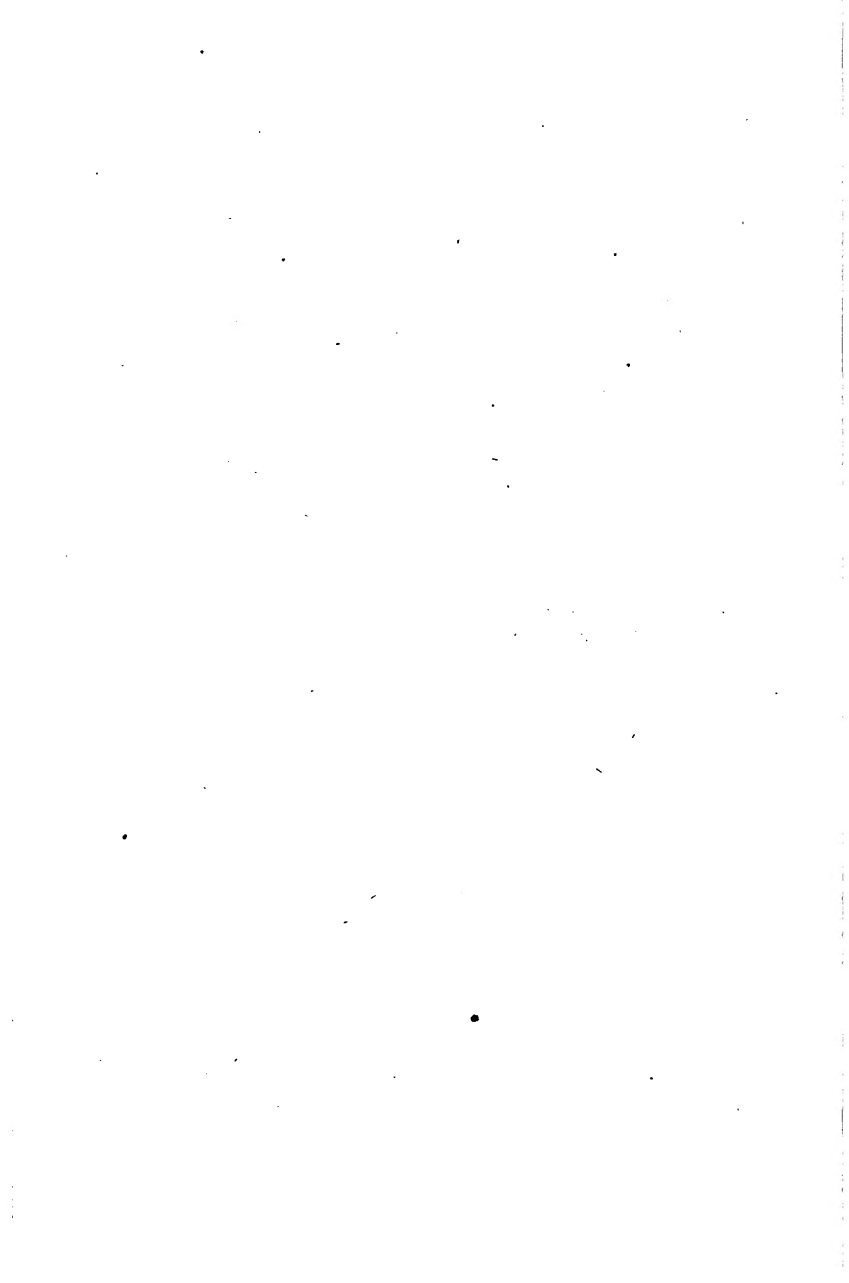
FROM THE REQUEST OF

SAMUEL NEWTON CUTLER

(Class of 1877)

OF BOSTON





THE
9
GREAT TRIBULATION;

OR,
THE THINGS COMING ON THE EARTH.

BY
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"A time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation."—DAN. xii. 1.

"Then shall be great tribulation."—MATTH. xxiv. 21.

Ninth Thousand.

CAREFULLY CORRECTED, WITH ADDITIONS.



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1860.

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE NINTH THOUSAND.

OWING to the writer being at a distance in the country when this work was passing through the press, many verbal inaccuracies escaped his notice. He has gone over the whole work laboriously and minutely, and corrected in every instance what the fair reader would see to be accidental mistakes, in which, however, hostile eyes made out reflections on the author's scholarship. This edition is thereby very materially improved. He earnestly prays that this book, praised and censured by the press more than most books, may continue to do increasingly the good he knows it has already done.

PREFACE.

It is impossible for the most thoughtless to overlook the impressive and almost unprecedented character of the age in which we live. Events, as rapid in their succession as they are startling in their magnitude, splendour, and consequences, chase each other like waves on the sea, or fall on us like falling stars on earth of a winter evening.

I stated in "Apocalyptic Sketches" that the last vial—that is, the symbol which denotes the source and measure and duration of the "Great Tribulation"—was, in all probability, poured out in 1848, from which time to 1867 we may expect to feel its intensest effects. Subsequent observation, and comparison of facts as they evolve with the "sure word of prophecy" as it is written, have served to strengthen my conviction of the accuracy of this inference; and in this volume it is my object to show that the prophecies of the Redeemer enunciated on the Mount of Olives, and other predictions referable to the same category and era, are being daily translated into history. It is under the action of the last vial, which, in order to denote the universality of its effects, was poured "into the air," that we detect those abnormal, physical, political, and social conditions, which persons ignorant of, or hostile to all prophetic investigations allow to have an intensity and universality, to say the least, startling.

Disease, during the last ten years, has steadily struck with destructive blight the potato and the vine, men and cattle, with a force and frequency

surely unusual; and the only explanation scientific investigation has arrived at is just that stated in prophecy as the effect of the last vial, a morbid taint or influence in "the air." I do not say there never was before cholera, or diphtheria, or miasma destructive of animal and vegetable life; but surely these influences, all of them the subjects of prophecy, have recently been developed with an intensity, a continuity, and to an extent, and with a concurrence at least most remarkable.

Diseases of various types, from the consuming fever of Lisbon in 1857 down to a less marked but no less actual degeneracy of physical health, have been noticed and commented on by physicians. Frequently have I heard them remark that some radical change, probably in the air, or its *ozone*, or its electricity, has taken place, followed by a weakening of the springs of life. So felt is this alteration, that the medical treatment which was proper some ten years ago is not applicable now. It is no solution of all this to say similar events have occurred in previous years. There are at present an area accumulation and intensity of morbid agencies in the air which few previous years have witnessed. This is, I believe, so far a fulfilment of the effects of the pouring out of the seventh apocalyptic vial; and men who a few years ago sceptically and scornfully treated this solution begin at length to recognise at least its high probability.

We have up to this point regarded the effect of the pouring of the seventh vial into the air as purely physical. This, however, is but one part of its effects. A universal influence is the dominant idea. Has any disturbing action been manifested in other departments of social life?

Let us call to mind the Russian war, of which the Crimea was the centre, while all the European nations either looked on or took part. Then we had the social intercourse and bands and links of nations suddenly shattered, and streams of sorrow and suffering

and distress transmitted to countless English firesides. These were alike sudden, mysterious, and unforeseen.

No sooner was the Russian war covered up, if not quenched, than a quarrel with China, followed by a yet more recent one, that may rise to the dimensions of a great national conflict, broke out. Scarcely had the clouds darkened the sky there, when the most terrible shock our empire ever received occurred in our eastern provinces. A hundred thousand trained and disciplined sepoys, the subjects of the Queen, rose simultaneously against our authority in India, and though vigorously opposed by a mere handful of heroic men, it seemed doubtful if India could be held. Massacres and murders and barbarities were inflicted on British men and women and children of unparalleled brutality and cruelty. Never did so many families suffer so severely. Never did a more crushing stroke reach the heart of our nation. Thus, from the pine forests of the North to the palm groves of the East, has the social atmosphere become charged with irritant and disturbing elements, which explode in succession.

Nor has the commercial air been less convulsed. During 1857 a commercial panic, called in the *Times* newspaper "a commercial earthquake," smote Europe and America, and house after house, alike old and prudent and reliable, fell. Banks exploded one after another. The prince-merchants of yesterday are penniless to-day; and widows and orphans innumerable have been reduced from comparative competence to absolute beggary.

Let us combine all these shocks, and then reflect if there be not enough to vindicate the interpretation we have endeavoured to establish, that a wide-spread derangement of social and national life,—and, if one might enumerate the incessant murders, suicides, and poisonings with which the papers teem,—of moral life also, is the condition of our world at this moment.

The great earthquake that accompanies the pouring out of this vial occurred in 1848, when Europe reeled like a drunken man, and kings were thrown from

their thrones, and even the Pope was projected by its force from the Vatican. The disturbances in France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, and Austria, constantly recurring, are its vibrations,—or lesser “earthquakes in divers places,” not unaccompanied with literal ones also,—as in Naples, Dec. 1857, in which were 9000 killed and 5000 mutilated. These convulsions, graphically and briefly stated as the effects of the pouring out of vial seventh, are enumerated in detail in the prophecy of our Lord on the Mount of Olives. In fact, Matthew xxiv. is the evangelic exposition of the apocalyptic prophecy. This great earthquake, of which that at Naples is only a prefiguration and premonition, is expressed in another shape: “I will shake all nations.”

What nation is perfectly at ease at this moment? Is not France rocking from Boulogne to Bourdeaux? Is there not expressed by its rulers, and implied in their stringent enactments, a sense of insecurity? The desperate attempt of Orsini did not create the disquiet—it merely revealed what was suspected and feared. Italy heaves with fires worse than volcanic. Naples is on the eve of insurrection. The Romagna insists on freedom. The partisans of the Pope are already contemplating the removal of the Popedom to Jerusalem. Belgium is agitated with intestine differences. Germany is ill at ease. Russia, recovering from one war, is simply sharpening its sword for another. Turkey dies quietly—incidental spasms disturbing its deathbed.

Great changes are passing over the political aspect of our own country. China is again stirred to its depth, and its disintegration is begun. Persia enjoys a lull. India, recently torn in pieces by a mutiny become rebellion, and the insurrection of an army, almost the revolution of an empire, and still decomposed, has left effects that must last long. Had we no internal uneasiness of our own, it is enough that the scenes of the Crimea, and the more recent events in Lucknow and Delhi and Cawnpore have

projected their gigantic shadows, and left a chill as of death on many a warm heart.

What throne in Europe has not felt these successive shocks? What nation on the Continent can be named which is not now undergoing organic change? Everywhere we see the loosening of social bands—the rocking and tilting of thrones—the thirst of change—the restlessness of mind—apparently the throes and agonies of nature groaning and travailing with the birth of a new and nobler genesis. Russia, repulsed, as indicated in Ezekiel, is preparing for her next and victorious march over Constantinople and the seven churches of Asia into Palestine, at that time to be the scene of stupendous marvels and judgments. France, the great actor in the prophetic outline, flushed with her Italian conquests, is reposing in her short bivouac, in order to enter once more on the arena refreshed and strong as a giant to fulfil her destiny. Austria, furious at defeat and disappointment, longs to avenge her wrongs, and tries by sacrifice to conciliate Hungary. Italy is one huge volcano; but, perhaps, making ready to receive into her fiery bosom the papacy, with all its spoils of plundered nations, and injured kingdoms, and violated rights, and all its sins and its crimes inexpiable for ever.

Our own beloved land may soon be girdled with a belt of fire. Her freedom, her faith, her prosperity, her accessible asylum for the refugee and the oppressed, her gigantic power, her outspoken independence, her treasures, and her triumphs, are the hate of despots, the envy of courts, and the provocatives of hostility on the part of nations that remember her past superiority, and long to measure swords with her once more. No ordinary events are looming up from every point of the European horizon, like strange birds of evil omen. All the ten years that have passed away, and the seven that still remain of the era of the "Great Tribulation," will cover a time of trouble unprecedented since there

was a nation. It is the era in which there "shall be great distress of nations, with perplexity," political, social, commercial, and moral—the disintegration of political party, the distrust of trade, the dereliction of moral obligations, confusion of principles, and collision of passions, "the sea and the waves roaring." There also shall be fulfilled and felt what is written in St. Luke, "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

But Christians are not to be alarmed. "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." Our brightest and best things are in reversion. A glorious morning will one day break upon the earth; a rich inheritance will take the place of what will soon pass away. The waves of the "Great Tribulation" will all subside into that quiet bay, on which no tempest shall ever beat, and on whose bosom the sweet sunshine shall sleep for ever.

The lull that now exists among the nations of Europe is very much like that of 1851. It is the eve of more terrible disturbance, and the time of preparation for it. Science, and art, and national resources are tasked in all directions, in order to make the most formidable weapons for offensive and defensive war. The discoveries of modern science, as embodied in the iron rail, the ocean-steamer, and the electric telegraph, will lead to such military gatherings, such concentration of troops, such lightning-like rapidity of action, such shocks of armies as never were equalled in the history of the world. Everything seems to make ready for no common crisis, no ordinary issue. In the words of Daniel, "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." In the words of St. Matthew, "there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be." On some, we are told, "wrath is come to the uttermost."

But we must not overlook, in the midst of the coming tribulation, those rays of glory stricken through the clouds, which relieve the density of the night, and indicate beyond the sunshine that sleeps unbroken on the everlasting hills of the heavenly Jerusalem. However sure the tribulation, there are those that "come out of it," and stand resplendent "in white robes," who "shall be purified and made white and tried," who shall "rest and stand in their lot at the end of the days." Of these I have not been unmindful in the lectures which make up this volume. These compose that true Church, the age of which no time tells, the magnitude of which no space includes, and the adherents of which no figures can sum up.

If the first portion of the following lectures deals with the nature and the marks of the "Great Tribulation," the last half has respect to the character, and condition, and hopes, and happiness, and destiny of them who Daniel tells us are blessed,—“Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.” There will be found in this part much to cheer, and animate, and sustain the people of God in circumstances of unprecedented trouble.

I have shown in previous works, and intimated an opinion not unfrequently in this, that the steady decay of Mahometanism in Europe—that desolating Euphratean flood which several centuries ago overflowed Eastern Christendom—was one of the premonitory symptoms of nearing fulfilment of prophecy.

The following description of its condition is from the *Times*' correspondent in Sept. 1859.

“The alarming state of the Ottoman empire, which country seems going through a succession of financial somersaults, from which, however, somehow or other, it manages to alight with only an additional contusion, renders the accounts from the provinces truly deplorable; extra taxes being levied on the unfortunate populations, to be redeemed by

the imports of future years, while hordes of Albanian Irregulars render the provinces bordering on Greece insecure, and expose the poor inhabitants to every species of extortion and injustice. It is not to be wondered that the old feeling of hatred to the Turkish yoke, which dates from the day that Mahomet II. took possession of Byzantium, should be as much alive as ever. The Christians are replacing everywhere in the East, by a constant and unperceived effort, the Mahometans, who are disappearing; and, under these circumstances, those of the Christian elements which offer some guarantee for the future must naturally attract the attention of Europe. Owing to their religion, the Christian populations of the East consider themselves specially placed under the protection of Russia, and the influence of that power with the Greeks has been generally considered all-powerful."

I have also frequently referred elsewhere to the consuming judgment that now wastes the great Roman Apostasy, and foreshows its nearing ruin. On these I do not dwell in this work.

I hope soon to publish what I may call a photographic sketch of the Millennial state, because it is revelation, as a companion to this volume.

I need not add that, like all my previous works on prophecy, this will receive plenty of that style of secular criticism which consists in scoffs, ridicule, and caricature. The world cannot endure the truths of prophecy. It shrinks from the "blessed hope" of the Church. Its argument is, "all things continue as they were." Do not disturb our comforts, our gains, and industry. Let us alone. On such the day of our Lord cometh as a thief in the night. Yet these very men admit the existing uncertainty that attaches to all that.

But "to them that look for Him, He will appear the second time unto salvation."

Lord Carlisle, in his little work on Daniel viii., expresses his belief that we are nearing the close of

our present dispensation ; a remark he is not likely to make unless under a deep conviction of its truth. Such an observation from his point of view ought to make secular writers suspect that there is ground of investigation, not matter for merriment and invective, in so sacred and interesting subjects of study.

The following extract from a pamphlet lately published by M. Bartholony, President of the Paris and Orleans Railway Company, no mean authority on financial and commercial matters, gives an accurate description of the feeling entertained by French commercial men at the present moment :—

“ France is rich—very rich, but she hesitates to place her savings in any speculation which requires a long return. Why ? It is useless to create an illusion for ourselves as to the feeling which prevails. It is because she does not see clearly into the present and less into the future. Disquieted by unforeseen shocks she fears to abandon herself too soon to confidence which solicits her ; she anxiously interrogates every point of the horizon, dreading a tempest in every cloud, and mistrusting even the serenity, which appears to her to be only momentary.”
—*Times*, Nov. 1859.

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THE
GREAT TRIBULATION;

OR,
THINGS COMING ON THE EARTH.

LECTURE I.

THE GLORIOUS DELIVERANCE.

“ And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people : and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time : and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”—
DANIEL xii. 1.

I ACCEPT the generally-received opinion of commentators, that Michael, the prince that standeth for the ancient people of God, is not a created angel, but our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The prophecy seems to imply that having long been seated on his throne as Mediator, interceding in behalf of his own people, man's extremity will become his opportunity ; and that he will stand up toward the close of this present Christian economy, amid miracles, and stupendous phenomena, and great and startling issues, in behalf of his cast-off, but not finally cast-out people, the remnant of the house of Judah and of Israel. It is plain from the language, “ thy people,” addressed to Daniel, an inspired prophet, and yet an enthusiastic and patriotic Jew, that the interposition of Christ on this occasion

will be primarily in behalf of that remarkable race still preserved, often assailed, but never crushed; like their own burning bush, always blazing, and not consumed; and that the time will come when they, so long cast out, shall at length be grafted in, and restored to their own land; for a Deliverer, as quoted by the Apostle in the Epistle to the Romans, shall come out of Sion, and shall turn away ungodliness from all the children of Jacob. "Thy people," therefore, are primarily the Jews. Nobody can read their history without seeing they are the standing miracle of the age; the inexplicable phenomena of Providence, unless beheld in the only light which casts splendour on the past, and a gleaming and brightening glory on the future, the sure word of God's prophecy. The Jews are found in every capital on earth; least at home in their own; having property everywhere, except in that land which is theirs by title-deeds, in comparison of which those of England's proudest and mightiest noble are but of yesterday; and when one sees them on our streets, or, as I have done, joined with them in singing the beautiful Hebrew Psalms of David in their own synagogue, one cannot help seeing even on their faces an air of melancholy, as if it were the shadow of a great ancestral crime, which eighteen hundred years of suffering have been utterly unable to wash away. They speak all tongues; they are found on the banks of the Thames, the Danube, the Rhine, the Tiber, the Mississippi, the Missouri, the Ganges—everywhere; and yet they never seem to be at home; they are what the poet has called them, "the race of the weary foot," running from themselves, as if to get rid of the recollection of some deed of blood that has stained their hands, and left its indelible imprint upon the hearts of even the most benevolent of them all. If we examine the treatment they have received, we see how willing man is to fulfil prophecy where he has no business. When the priests of Rome have been asked, Why do you so maltreat the Jews? when some of our ancient kings, who extracted their teeth in order to extort their gold, were

questioned why they did so, they devoutly, or rather hypocritically said, Why, God has pronounced a curse upon them, that they shall be a by-word and a scoff among all people. In other words, man's own lusts, and passions, and thirst of gold made him particularly anxious to help God to fulfil his prophecy, but left it very inconvenient for him to obey the precepts of mercy and of loving-kindness. There is no place upon earth, I believe, where at this moment they are worse treated than in that very city in which sits a personage, most uncomfortably situated at the present moment, who calls himself the Vicar of Christ. There the poor Jews are thrust into a wretched, unhealthy quarter of imperial Rome called the Ghetto; they are forced to pay a heavy tax every year in order to be suffered to exist under even the shadow and in the miserable dungeon of that so-called Holy City and capital of Christendom. A maid-servant, who did not know the meaning of the words she uttered, took hold of a young child, Mortara, dropped a little water on his brow, and uttered in Latin, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The moment that the parents, who were Jews, went to bring home their child, what were they told? The Inquisitor-General told them that the mark of the Redeemer was upon that child's brow, and that no power upon earth could compel them to give it back. Sir Moses Montefiore, much to his credit, went as a deputation from his own Church to Rome; got an audience of Cardinal Antonelli; asked him if he would interpose, for he is the real Pope; the other one behind the scenes being a poor, helpless, old man. Antonelli told him to call again; put him off—that is the diplomacy of that latitude; he would see about it. Sir Moses had to wait week after week, hoping against hope; at last he asked if he could have an interview with Pio Nono. At once Antonelli told him it could not be given; that the child was a Christian: that it never could be restored to its mother; she may see it through iron bars, or through a window; but she never can indulge

the instincts of a mother, and clasp to her bosom the boy that she knows and feels to be her own. Such is the conduct of the Vicar of Christ, so called, in that capital which one would think would be the most illustrious in the world for its justice and its mercy; but in reference to the Jew it seems to be the most cruel, proscriptive, and persecuting of all. We of England are only second better off; for our own prince, the Prince of Wales, nobly thinking that when in Rome English people ought not to be ashamed of being English people—gave a fine contradiction to the wretched sophistry, that when we are in Rome, we should do as Rome does, and in Constantinople as Constantinople does—the Prince of Wales, instead of doing as Rome does, went to his English Church. And where is it, do you think? In an old stable, outside the walls of Rome; it being thought a pollution to that sacred capital that an English Protestant Church should be suffered within its walls. But this, however, refers to us; we can bear the persecution; the poor Jew cannot so well bear it.

At or near this period of trouble Christ will interpose; having no sympathy with him that assumes to represent Him, and stand up amidst stupendous miracles of mercy and of unobliterated love in behalf of a people persecuted, a by-word, a scoff, and a hissing among all nations; restores them to their land; replace them in their ancient and illustrious capital; and oh! it is a sight that one would travel from London to Jerusalem to see—a whole nation restored to Palestine, prostrate at the feet of the Prince of Peace; and in their own magnificent tongue—that mother-tongue from which all others are but distant and debilitated progenies—and with their own deep, musical, Oriental voices lifting up, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and as the voice of many peoples, those words of the English Liturgy, "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. When thou tookest upon thee to deliver mankind, thou didst not abhor the virgin's womb: when thou hadst overcome the sharpness of

death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God the Father. We," children of Israel, "believe that thou wilt come to be our Judge. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, take away the sins of thy people Israel;" and where our Fathers said, "Crucify him!" we shout, "Hosannah!" and where they said, in their ignorance, "Away with him!" we will join and lift the anthem peal that will never cease, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him. Hosannah in the highest!" Such will be fact. My expectation is not fancy, but the inference from the soberest, the barest, the most frequently-repeated prophecy.

But when this takes place, there will be a time of great trouble. "At that time there will be a time of such trouble as has not been on the earth since there was a nation;" and which is stated in the New Testament to be a time of such trouble that there never will be any trouble equal to it. We have that time of trouble delineated in St. Matthew, where, after some portraits of the judgments upon Jerusalem, he gives a reference, clear and unmistakeable, to the close of this present economy. The great time of trouble began, we think, in 1848: in other words, it synchronises with the pouring out of the seventh vial; at which the first shock of the great European earthquake occurred: its succeeding shocks still steadily occur, year after year. Review at your leisure the events that have transpired since that time. Why, we are no sooner out of one trouble—I mean the world—than we are plunged into another. In 1849, Europe Asia, America, were desolated by an overwhelming pestilence; in 1850, Rome, anticipating its ruin, made its last spasmodic grasp or clutch at the sceptre of England, if perchance it might retain a last footing before it goes down into the depths of ruin. In 1851, we had a bright glimpse, by way of symbol, earnest, or type of millennial peace. But, after that, we had the first hint of the complications in the East; then, from 1854, a war which has sent streams of bitter-

ness into many a happy English home, and left cold shadows upon many a once-bounding English heart. The dead that sleep in the distant Crimea will not soon be forgotten; and I trust the memories of the brave that fell there will never come before us without thanks and gratitude for those that so heroically fought, and many of them so hopefully and piously fell. No sooner had the Russian war been closed, than the great Indian storm burst upon Asia; an empire was in peril; and many English homes have lost their brightest lights in consequence of that unexpected, and murderous outburst of a deceived, infatuated, and superstitious native population! No sooner had that tempest been laid, by God's blessing on the heroism of our troops, and the sagacious diplomacy of those who were raised up to rule the storm, like a thunder-cloud, than we saw all Europe gathering from all parts of the horizon to battle. Upon the beautiful plains of Italy half a million of men meet in deadly conflict, and left thousands on the field numbered with the dead. I stated before, what many thought was impossible, that Russia's destiny was the East. Recent complications, in various quarters will soon show the truth of this.

I believe that our own land, whatever be the combination that girdles it—even as if it should girdle it with fire—is destined to emerge comparatively unscathed from the conflict; and that old England's sun will not fade till it mingle with the splendours of that sun that shall have no cloud and no western declension. We separated from the great Apostacy and the ten kingdoms at the Reformation, and God has blessed us ever since, and God will bless us still. Notwithstanding all our faults—and we dare not deny them, and we would not conceal them—there is in the depth of our nation's heart, a living religion, without precedent or parallel in its history.

What a change has passed upon the nobility, the middle classes, and through the instrumentality of city missions, ragged schools, and all the noble agencies that God in his great goodness has called into play,

upon the poorer classes also! All these things are the commencement of a work that neither Russia, Austria, nor France, nor the whole world, will be able to crush; and if ten righteous men in Sodom could have saved it from the flames, ten times ten thousand in the heart of our country will shield it in the "great tribulation" that is coming on the nations of the earth. I may quote one very striking proof of the position we now occupy, in Rev. xix. where is a picture which I think refers to the restoration of the Jews. We read first of all that the great corrupter of the earth, the Romish apostacy, is judged; and when her smoke rises up for ever, the nations sing, Alleluia. The Rev. E. B. Elliot observes, this is the first Hebrew word that occurs in the songs of the Apocalypse, and he thinks from that word being introduced on this occasion and at this date it indicates that the Jew is present with the Gentile praising God for all his mercies and his judgments. Then a voice, we are told, comes out of the throne; a recitative, to use a musical expression, addressed to Jew and Gentile: "Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great." Then hear the grand response: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude," the grandest music of all. To hear ten thousand people sing the 100th Psalm, or even five thousand, or two thousand, is far grander than all the organ stops that were ever let loose; the voice of a great multitude is the grandest and most thrilling music of all. "As the voices of many waters." Did you ever stand upon the beach, even on a summer evening, and listen to that deep under tone of the ocean praising God? Did you ever stand upon the rocks and hear it when it lifts its great waves to the sky, and they like white-robed choristers unite in praising God? "As the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia;" here again the Hebrew word; "for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Now at this very time, when the judgments come upon the great apostacy, and you hear the voice of the Jew clear and unmistakeable in the great anthem peal,

you will find at the close of the chapter a picture of the tribulation which Daniel makes synchronous with these two grand events. "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood:" the language of awful conflict. "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." And then mark what takes place: "And I saw the beast"—the wild beast, the symbol of the great western apostacy—"and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." And what was the issue? "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet"—the exponent of his voice, the priesthood—"that wrought miracles before him. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth." That chapter seems evidently to synchronise with the verse on which I have now been commenting in Daniel xii. Well, then, "All thy people shall be delivered;" that is, in the midst of the judgments which I have delineated, or rather, which I have read, God's ancient people, if this refers to the Jews, as I think it does, as well as the first clause, "shall be delivered." And the Apostle, speaking of this very event, makes the striking remark, "If the casting away of the Jews has been the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" All Israel, he says, shall be saved; and God shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. The branches that were broken off shall be grafted in, and God's goodness as well as severity shall be exhibited in their case.

But if we refer this to God's own people, which I think we may safely do, then "all shall be delivered that are found written in the book." What book?

First, the book of life, impenetrable to us ; that secret and mysterious record no human eye can see, no finger can touch or turn over. All attempts of men to specify who are the elect of God have always recoiled upon themselves in disappointment and confusion. Secondly, the book of remembrance. Malachi speaks of a book of remembrance. What is written in that book ? Every cup of cold water you have given a disciple, every tear you have shed for Christ's sake, every prayer you have offered, every effort you have made, every donation you have given to make the world wiser and happier for your having passed through it. And then, thirdly, the book of revelation. In it you do not decipher your names ; but you discover what is far better, your character. If you find yourselves among the meek, among the merciful, among the holy, among the trusting, among the believing, you need not doubt that your name is written in the mysterious book of life.

So, then, from the whole of this tribulation the people of God are delivered. "Neither life nor death shall be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus." When these things begin to come to pass, when the waves of the great tribulation begin to break upon us, when the earthquake rolls, and dynasties are smitten from their thrones, and scattered as drift-wood upon the streams and currents of time, we are not to be afraid, but to lift up our heads, for our redemption draweth nigh. While we listen—the ear on the ground, and try to hear in the distance the tramp of approaching conflict, let us rejoice that the world's greatest tribulation is the hour of the Christian's most magnificent deliverance. Preparing for that age, let us lay up in our hearts a capital of sunshine ; when dark days come that sunshine will gladden us ; and in the darkest night and at eventide it will be light with us. We are sure that nothing we desire to preserve, or that God has made, will be injured in that great tribulation. Sin will be expunged ; who wants to keep it ? Sickness will disappear ; who desires to retain it ? Sorrow will flee away, and hearts that are now broken will then be bounding ; who wishes it to be

otherwise? Nothing that God has made, from the star in the sky to the flower upon the field, from the ephemeral insect in the sunbeam to the archangel that worships by the throne, shall be destroyed ; what has gone wrong shall be made right, what Satan has usurped shall be taken from his grasp ; and this weary world of ours, that has wept, and groaned, and suffered so long, shall be emancipated from its thralldom, reinstated in more than its pristine magnificence and beauty, and the world close with a Paradise vastly more magnificent and beautiful than that with which it began.

LECTURE II.

THE DOOMED CITY.

We read in the inspired Record of the glory and the gloom of the "City of the Great King"—the joy of the whole earth, Jerusalem.

"Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the build-ings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be?" &c.—MATTHEW xxiv. 1—6.

It may prove conducive to our comfort and edification in these last times if I now direct attention to some of the leading truths of that grand prophecy, spoken under the shadow of the temple by the Great Prophet, seated on the Mount of Olives, and surrounded by his disciples, half instructed in the nature of the kingdom, but not insensible to their need of additional light or unwilling to receive it.

In this prophecy is much relating to scenes long passed away—the fall of Jerusalem, once the joy and the beauty of the whole earth; and the destruction of her magnificent temple, not eclipsed by the Parthenon, the glory of ancient Greece. This prophecy therefore consists partly of predictions relating to the ruin of the temple and the city of Jerusalem; and partly of prophecies at this moment passing into history, and partly of predictions of events, near but still future; and closing with that

great epoch when the Son of man shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and gather his elect together from the four winds, from one end of heaven unto the other. It appears to me, that the design of our Lord's discourse is to convince the Jews that the end of their polity was not the end of the world. For this purpose he shows that far more stupendous phenomena will usher in the last great catastrophe of the earth. This is not the common, but it is no less the true explanation. The question of the disciples naturally divides into three parts. In verse third they say, "Tell us, when shall these things be?" What things? Those he had stated in the previous chapter, where he says, in the 36th verse, "All these things shall come upon this generation;" while he breaks forth into one of the most tender and touching appeals to the very inmost heart of Jerusalem, that ever fell from divine or human lips, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth"—implying that they would see him one day—"till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The disciples, having heard the startling announcement, that the glory of Jerusalem should fade, and that the magnificent temple should be laid in ruins, ask three distinct questions:—First, "Tell us, when shall these things be?" secondly, "What shall be the sign of thy advent, and the signal of thy personal presence and appearance?" and thirdly, "What shall be the sign of the end of the world;—the sign of the "finishing up together," the ending up together, of this dispensation?" in which we now play a part, it being preliminary to that dispensation, in which the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the whole earth as the waters of the ocean cover the channels of the great deep. The Great Prophet proceeds to answer these three

questions; and a very careful scrutiny of the whole chapter will show where he deals with the one, and where he replies to the other; although sometimes the approaching ruin of the Jewish economy seems to interlace with and to embosom foreshadows of the approaching ruin of the Gentile economy, and the establishment of Christ's kingdom over all the kingdoms of this world. In the first six verses there is sketched the prophetic portrait of the ruin of the temple and city of Jerusalem. Previous to that, "Many shall come, saying, 'I am Messiah,' whom the Jews were looking for; and they shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but"—referring to the last of the three questions—"the end is not yet." Then he proceeds from the 7th verse to the close of the 14th, to tell them what shall be the fore-signs of the end of the dispensation. He says, before the end of the temple you will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but the end of the world is not yet come. "For," he says,—mark the word, the illative, in the 7th verse—"for," that is, previous to the end of the world, "nation shall rise against nation;"—very different from "wars and rumours of wars;"—"and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows;" that is, the beginning of that travail which the Apostle alludes to, when he he says, "All creation groans and travails in pain, waiting to be delivered." "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you;" he is speaking to the Christian disciples, not to the Jews—"they shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But," he adds, "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be

saved." And then he gives what may be called the very alarm-bell that sounds the last epochs of this dispensation; and intimates that the last sands that have sparkled so long in the suns of time are about to run out; "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world,"—not, and all the world shall be converted; that is not said;—but it shall be preached in all the world "for a witness unto all nations; and then," the moment this is accomplished, "shall the end come." From the 15th verse down to the 20th, he returns to the approaching catastrophe of Jerusalem and the Jewish polity, where he says, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains; let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." But he shows that these things are nothing to the great events that shall usher in the last and closing catastrophe; "for *then*," he says, "shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For," he says, the advent of Christ shall be of this sort, "as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Immediately after the tribulation of those

days"—of which he has given the beginning of sorrows,—"shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven;"—they asked, "What shall be the sign of thy coming?"—"and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." After employing a parable in the 25th chapter to illustrate this great event, and showing the practical instruction which the anticipation of it should leave, he refers back, as in the 31st verse, to the 31st verse of the 24th chapter; the intervening passage being altogether an illustration. Passing from the 24th chapter at the 31st verse, to the 25th chapter at the 31st verse, he says, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Thus we ascertain the three great answers to the three great questions; first, "When shall these things be?" of which I will briefly speak; secondly, "What shall be the sign of the approach of thy presence?" and thirdly, "When shall be the end or the winding-up of that dispensation which thou hast come to introduce into the world, and to reveal to thy church?"

In the following observations I will first refer to the desolation predicted to overtake Jerusalem and its magnificent temple. That temple was one of the great wonders of the world. Nations came and gazed with

admiration on its magnificence. Its roof was covered with plates of burnished gold, reflecting the sunbeams with so great splendour and intensity that it was said no bird could light upon it or bear the excess of glory. Some of the stones with which it was built were forty-five yards long, and many of them of the purest and most beautiful marble. Knit together with all the skill of a master-builder, it appeared to the disciples and to the Jews impossible that any force which man could wield, or any undermining that ingenuity could suggest would ever succeed in reducing to ruin so glorious a structure—so gigantic an edifice, strong in its material grandeur, and stronger in the affections of a people that loved and almost worshipped it, and stronger still as they believed—but most mistakenly believed—beneath the everlasting protection of the God of Israel. For our blessed Lord, a man of sorrows—despised by the great ecclesiastical officers, denounced by the Sanhedrim—chief in a group of fishermen and tax-gatherers, to seat himself under the shadow of that ancient and gorgeous fabric, and to launch this prophecy upon the winds—“In forty years not one stone of it, forty-five yards in length they may be, and of weight inconceivable, shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down”—was either the evidence of fanaticism, or of the words of the mighty God, the Prince of Peace. In forty years we read all that the Saviour said came to pass; the walls of the temple were levelled with the dust; the ploughshare was literally drawn with numberless horses through the ruins of the illustrious fabric; and that remarkable race, long forsaken but not yet forgotten, projected by the terrible convulsion in countless fragments over all the world, are at this moment to be found everywhere, disorganized—disintegrated yet distinct—each fragment reflecting unspent rays of a glory that has passed away, but prophetic, also, of a splendour, a glory, and an elevation that eye hath not seen, and tongue hath not told, and heart hath not conceived—their heritage in reversion. The most depressed

amid the nations of the earth now, they shall be the glory of all nations, and their city Jerusalem once more the beauty and the joy of the whole earth, and Palestine the most prolific and pre-eminent of all lands. This will be accomplished in the outset, in all probability, by human means, Britain taking a leading part. Who does not sometimes gather from the teeming years as they pass presentiments and earnest of the approaching deliverance? The war that closed at Sebastopol began about Jerusalem. The supposed sepulchre of the Prince of Peace became the source of a war that convulsed all Europe. Since that day it has again come up. If it be true, as prophecy seems to indicate and history to attest, that the great river Euphrates—that is, the Mahometan flood and superstition—is rolling back to its source, and that Turkey in Europe is to be a Christian nation, and the mosque of St. Sophia to ring with the accents of Christ and him crucified, if not glorified—when that dynasty is dissolved, Palestine, which is now the property of the Sultan, will be somebody's; and who has so great a right to it as that princely race who at this moment wait, and long, and pray, and write upon their tablets in their synagogues the prayer that the Messiah would soon come and take Israel home, and make Jerusalem again the city of the Great King?

Without entering upon this tempting subject, I would specify some of the lessons taught by this most remarkable prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem and its Temple. How frail is the greatest fabric that man can build; how sure is the least word that God has spoken! The Parthenon, the glory of Greece, is now a crumbling ruin; the gigantic monuments that the Pharaohs left to be their burial-places are sinking day by day in the sands of the desert; the temple of Jerusalem, that took ages and the wealth of princes to build, retains scarcely a fragment of its magnificence, if we may except, perhaps, one huge stone close by the Mosque of Omar, between thirty and forty yards in length, and demonstrably one of the stones of the ancient temple, worn hollow by the kisses of grey-haired and venerable rabbis,

who year after year kneel at it and kiss it, as if to fulfil the prediction of the Psalmist, "Thy saints take pleasure in her stones; her very dust is dear to them." What is thus proved true of material glory is no less true of all social greatness unsanctified by Christian grace. What is Tyre, the princess of the ancient commercial world? A bleak rock for fishermen to bleach their nets on. What is Rome, whose very name made barbarians tremble? To say, "I am a Roman citizen," was to assert immunity and protection everywhere. The quaking seat of a superstitious and fanatical despot priest. What is Athens, once the eye of Greece—the university of the world, the haunt of men of taste, and genius, and scholarship? A mere nest of bandits, that cannot appreciate its magnificent ruins, and would sell them all as readily as Esau his birthright for a mess of pottage. Our own nation has no immortality apart from character. With all its sins, however, it has, I think, a brilliant destiny before it. At the Reformation it separated from the ten kingdoms under the papacy; it has been the great protesting country ever since, where freedom finds a foothold, humanity a champion, and religion the holiest and the purest altar. It is a happy hope—God grant it may be a true one—that the sun of Britain may shine with advancing splendour until its beams mingle with the rays of the millennial sun, and it ceases to be Britain, Great Britain, only because absorbed in the greater glory of the Church and the kingdom of Christ.

It is the sins of nations that sap their strength and dim their glory. What ruined the temple? Not Titus and Vespasian, but the sins of them that worshipped by its altar. What laid in ruins Babylon, Tyre, Rome, Athens? The sins of the people that were in them. What overturned the Seven Churches of Asia? what destroyed the once prosperous Church of Africa? what has made the Church of Rome a wreck, a mere miserable wreck? The sins of them that were its rulers and its people. What can ruin us? Not all the Cossacks of the Don; not all the Russians

from their steppes ; not all France, and Germany, and Austria ; not savage Mussulman, and infuriate Sepoy, nor the wide world combined against us. Let us be true to our religion, our Bibles, our responsibilities, our duties, and our God, and our country will flourish in immortal youth.

The whole earth itself is to be involved in a yet greater catastrophe than that which overtook Jerusalem, and Rome, and Athens, and Tyre, and the Seven Churches of Asia. Peter tells us, "The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the works that are therein shall be burned up ;" and then he adds that most practical lesson—"Seeing then that all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" When the disciples asked, "What shall be the sign of the end of the world?" our blessed Lord did not say, "That is a curious question that you have no right to ask;" on the contrary, he accepted the question as legitimate, and he proceeded to answer it. The only answer he did not give was the day, the hour, the date ; these he did not specify : but the moral signs and prefigurations of the approach of that era he lays down with a minuteness so specific that he that reads may run while he reads. He says, before the destruction of Jerusalem, "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ." Open the page of Josephus, the historian, and you will find it stated that Jerusalem swarmed with pretended Messiahs, all of whose testimony was one—namely, that if the Jews would only believe in them, they would deliver them from the Romans, and from the impending destruction by Titus and Vespasian. This seems to be a great law of God, that men who reject the truth are given up to believe a lie ; men that refuse Christ, the only Messiah, are found to accept the most monstrous absurdities. A grey-haired and aged sceptic, whose wild theories for the regeneration of the world have given him a notoriety not to be

envied, after denouncing Christianity in language too severe and unhallowed to be repeated, gave himself up to what he thinks the more rational religion of ascertaining what is doing in heaven above, and hell beneath, and in the future ages to come, by table-rapping and spirit-divining. The men who profess to be so rational that they will not accept the pure and sublime faith of Jesus, become the victims of such irrationality that they believe in old wives' fables, lying legends, and delusions which common sense must reprobate and scorn. Our Lord foretold that before the fall of Jerusalem there should be "wars and rumours of wars." These took place, for we read that province rose against province, governor against governor, and internal and internecine quarrels were rapidly depopulating that once populous and magnificent land. But these words, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," were not fulfilled previous to the ruin of the Jewish dynasty. "Rumours of wars" related to the downfall of Jerusalem; but "nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," did not take place previous to the fall of Jerusalem. Greswell, who writes upon the New Testament with all the skill, the learning, and the sobriety of an accomplished scholar, one of our ablest living divines, observes, "There is no instance of any war answering to this description"—namely, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom"—"prior to the rupture between the Jews and the Roman government, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, and that war happened too late in the period to serve the purpose of a sign, besides being the very event which every sign beforehand enumerated was designed to specify and to forebode." Therefore we are satisfied that nothing occurred previous to the destruction of Jerusalem at all sufficient to exhaust the prophesy, "Nation shall rise against nation."

Our blessed Lord proceeds to another section of the chapter, and tells us what should precede the destruction of Jerusalem, namely, "When ye shall see the abomi-

nation of desolation, spoken of by Daniel." This prophecy occurs in Daniel ix. 26, and it might be literally translated thus,—“Upon the battlements shall be the idol of desolation,” as, indeed, it is in the margin, which is always the most close and accurate rendering. Now, says our Lord, “the moment you shall see Daniel’s idol of desolation upon the battlements of your city, then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains; let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house; neither let him which is in the field turn back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days.” Now this fact we find to have been literally fulfilled. The Roman eagles were the standards of that people; they were also as idols and gods that they gave worship and adoration to. Now, we read in heathen and pagan story, that in A.D. 64, the Roman general encompassed Jerusalem, and so far penetrated into the city that he ‘planted the Roman eagles on the very walls adjacent to the Temple itself; that then, owing to some event not explained, he suddenly retreated, after he had thus planted the eagles upon the walls of Jerusalem; and it was during his retreat and the withdrawal of his army from the siege, that all the Christians then in Jerusalem rushed out, recognizing the predicted sign of Daniel, and found shelter in Pella, till the desolation and the tribulation had passed away. This part, therefore, was strictly and literally fulfilled, and relates to Palestine alone. In the parallel passage of the Gospel of Luke—for each Gospel gives us as it were its own peculiar and characteristic account of each transaction—in Luke xxi. 24, we read that “the Jews shall fall;” that is, when Jerusalem falls, “by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” The moment that Jerusalem fell the Jews were carried away captives; and the arch of Titus at Rome, standing at this moment, well known and frequently alluded to as the

triumphal arch, on which is the picture of the sacred things of the Jews, was raised to commemorate the triumph of Rome over that obstinate and rebellious race, and the utter desolation of all its glory by the removal of its most sacred and solemn symbols. And then "Jerusalem," it says, "shall be trodden under foot." Now what is its condition? Once it was the most fertile land in the world; its wine, its corn, and its oil were all but proverbs everywhere; its mountain sides were arranged into terraces; and the fruits of every clime, from those of our own northern to those of more favoured southern lands, were raised upon its terraces in succession upward to the skies. Palestine seemed to retain lingering on its bosom the last unshaded beams of Paradise, and to have mingling with its air the very atmosphere of Eden, yet unexhausted and undestroyed. But what is its condition now—speaking from the testimony of others? All its fertility is gone; its terraces that rose up its mountain sides are rent and torn by the lightning and the earthquake; its rocks are exposed and laid bare, and its soil washed away by floods and storms; its early and its latter rain at this moment is literally powder and dust; the plagues of the land that were predicted are realities; its cities are cities of the dead; there is but a thin and a scattered population anywhere; the Arab robber is its actual governor, the Sultan its nominal one. Commerce will not embark its capital in Palestine; emigrants find safety anywhere than there. What a change has passed upon that glorious land since Moses looked upon it from Mount Nebo, and since the spies brought from it the grapes of Eshcol, that struck with admiration those that for the first time beheld them! If we turn to its people, literally, in the words of the prophet, they are plucked off from the face of the whole earth.

Chateaubriand, who visited Palestine, and has written perhaps the most eloquent picture of its present desolation, uses such language as the following respecting it. "If I should live a thousand years I can never forget that desert when Jerusalem first appeared, and which

seemed still inspired with the majesty of Jehovah. When the guide exclaimed 'Behold the holy city—Jerusalem!' I did not at first know what it was. I believed it to be only a mass of shattered rock."

"The flaming monotonous sunshine above, and the rocky wastes beneath realize too faithfully Deut. xxviii. 3. 'Thy heavens over thee shall be as brass, and the earth under thee as iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust.' No river nor any stream flows by, no fertility surrounds it, no commerce seems able to approach its walls, no thoroughfare of nature finds the way to it. Her palaces are ruins, her hotels dreary convents, and her chief boast and triumph is a tomb."—*The Crescent and the Cross*.

Robinson says, "The houses of Jerusalem are built on mountains of rubbish twenty or fifty feet above the natural level. Nobody seems to make repairs as long as his dwelling does not absolutely refuse him shelter. If one room tumbles about his ears he removes to another, and permits rubbish and vermin to accumulate in deserted halls."

Lamartine says, "Jerusalem is the Queen of the Desert. Every local name retains in it some mystery, every cavern speaks of futurity, each rocky height reverberates the accents of some prophecy. The wasted rivers, the cloven rocks, and the yawning tombs attest the prodigy. The desert seems still stricken dumb with horror, as if it had not yet dared to break the silence which was felt when the voice of the Eternal had been heard."

Such is the portrait of Jerusalem. Now if I were to quote prophecy after prophecy predicting its ruin, and were to translate the prophecy of the future into the history of the past, you would conceive that I was reading an actual account of what some traveller had witnessed in 1859, rather than predictions uttered two and three thousand years ago. The people are a standing miracle. Ever since the glory departed from between the cherubim, and the Temple fell, and Jerusalem was laid in ruins, its people appear truly pheno-

menal. A race insulated from all the nations of the earth, mingling with them, yet never absorbed into the mass and made one with them. Where is the ancient Greek? As likely in Austria as in Athens. Where is the ancient Roman? He is not represented by the sensual and effeminate Italian of the present day; he is more likely here or in Moldavia than in Italy; at all events, Greek and Roman are merged, and lost, and absorbed, amid the mass of the nations of the world. But in every capital you will hear at morning dawn that deep-toned, rich bass voice, its tone indicating its Oriental origin, and not silent also to a suggestive mind about its future destiny; you will find the Jews princes and pedlers, the usurers and the bankers of the world; and while hated, scorned, mocked at, a by word, yet kings do homage to them, and emperors draw near to them with obsequious bows, and the exchequers of nations depend upon their word for prosperity or the reverse. The lava that spreads round Vesuvius no more truly indicates the fact of its fires, the fragments projected from an earthquake no more indicate its explosion, than these Jews projected from Jerusalem by some fell convulsion, and scattered like drift of a glorious wreck, refer back and tell you that they were once the children of the Great King, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, the very favourites, while now the forsaken, of the Most High. Persecuted always and everywhere, they prosper still. Except the flying fish, which is persecuted in the air and persecuted in the water, there is no other creature that typifies the oppression, the crushing oppression, to which the poor Jew is subject. How absurd, I repeat, to hear professing Christian people say, when they insult the Jew, proscribe and maltreat him, spit upon him, and doubt if a Jew feels, "Oh, it is all perfectly right; did not God predict it would be so?" What! It is your duty to do justly, to love mercy, and to do to others as you would be done by. God will take care of his prophecies, do not you trouble yourselves to fulfil them; He fulfils the predictions He has uttered; your

duties remain unimpaired—to show mercy, and to love thy brother as thyself. Instead of being honoured by persecuting the Jews, you provoke a curse; for God has specially said that he will bless them that bless Israel, and they that curse them shall be lightly esteemed. Yet all the persecution they have borne, all the severe pressure they have been the subjects of, has not effaced or expiated that strange memory they feel of a great ancestral crime, nor extinguished them or their hopes. They are found, as we have stated, scattered throughout every land, transacting the business of every capital; breathing the air of east and west and north and south; they drink of the Thames, the Missouri, the Mississippi, the Ganges, the Danube, and the Rhine; they are everywhere increasing in numbers and influence, seizing the colleges of the continent of Europe, becoming the ablest scholars; and by a great peculiarity, their property consists chiefly of what is called floating capital, they have no hereditary lands as a general rule, they carry their capital in their purses. Why so? Why are the Jews the great money-lenders, money-brokers, and capitalists? All their property is chiefly floating that they may be ready when the signal is displayed in the skies to depart, and domesticate themselves in their own home, Jerusalem. They are insulated, separate from the nations, because they are reserved for a great and a glorious destiny. Some day we may yet awaken and hear the tidings of a mysterious rush, when those you are trying to invest with dignities at home will laugh at your contemptuous offers, and depart to that better land which is kept by the Mahometan merely as the servant keeps the empty house for the sake of airing it, till the lawful and rightful inhabitant is ready to take possession. And when they return to Jerusalem—and when in those very streets in which they once cried with execrable scorn, “Away with him, away with him; crucify him, crucify him—they shall shout “Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!” surrounding nations, witnessing the strange spectacle, inexplicable upon any of the ordinary laws

of human experience, will receive an impression that Paul says will be to the nations of the earth as if it were life from the dead. If God has fulfilled the prophecies that related to these things minutely, let us learn not to hesitate to believe that prophecies yet unfulfilled He will minutely fulfil too. As the pilgrim gazes on Jerusalem, and studies its ruins, let him think not that it was more guilty than all the capitals of the world; but unless we repent we shall all likewise perish. Jerusalem says to us what we would do well to hear—

“My day of grace is sunk in night,
Our time of mercy spent,
For heavy was my children's crime,
And great their punishment.”

LECTURE III.

THE GREAT CONVULSION ; OR, SHAKING OF NATIONS.

Haggai anticipates the great Apocalyptic Earthquake of the Seyenth Vial.

“ Thus saith the Lord of hosts ; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land ;” &c.—HAGGAI ii. 6—8.

ONE feels a difficulty in supposing that the Mahometan, the Pagan, and the Hindoo, can in any sense be said to desire the presence, or the knowledge, or the glory of Christ. Christ by name, and as revealed in the Gospel, is not desired by all nations ; but that desire which lies deep in the heart of humanity—the sense of want, and yearning for satisfaction, nothing in the world can satisfy but Christ. He is the living bread for the hungry ; living water for the thirsty ; and all in all to them that trust in his blessed name. He only can satisfy, even when men know it not. For instance, an infant wakes from its sleep, cries in its cradle ; its desire is nutriment or food : it does not know what it wants ; and yet its cry is the evidence of a want its proper nutriment alone can remove. Even so it is with humanity : it does not know what can meet its want. There is a restlessness, an aspiration upwards, and a groping round and downwards in quest of something to satisfy its deep desires, which it evermore puts forth. It is the evidence of man’s ruin that he seeks to satisfy those wants from fallen nature ; it is the evidence of the infinite capacity and greatness of his soul that no created thing in the universe is able to satisfy it.

This promise has sometimes been applied by learned divines, in this instance I think erroneously, to the first advent of our blessed Lord. No one surely can venture to assert that when Christ came, 1860 years ago, all nations were convulsed. The very reverse was the fact. The temple of Janus was shut; there had been a respite from war for years; and amidst the peace of a world not at peace with God, but enjoying a momentary calm, the Prince of Peace was born. But the prediction here is an express declaration that he will shake all nations, that he will shake the heavens and the earth. If we refer to the New Testament, which is the inspired comment upon this prophecy, we shall find it still remains to be fulfilled. The Apostle Paul says, "Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Paul quotes this very prophecy as unfulfilled sixty-four years after the birth of our Lord. If we refer to Peter, we see at once what he alludes to: "The day of the Lord will come, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved"—that is, dislocated, convulsed, the heavens and the earth shaken. We read in the Book of Revelation that at the pouring out of the last vial of judgment, there was a great earthquake, σεισμός, shaking of the earth, or shaking of all nations. It is, therefore, evident that this prophecy is still to be fulfilled, and that such a convulsion as it contemplates will precede that magnificent morn, on which the future Paradise, with tenfold the beauty of the first and lost Paradise, shall return to our world, and there shall be high eternal noon; a day without a cloud, and without an end; "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever."

Let us turn our attention for a little to the existing condition of the missionary cause, as indicated in recent reports, as a foretoken of the dawn of the future day; secondly, to the removal of obstructions in the shaking and dislocating of nations, empires, thrones, and princi-

palities; and thirdly, the preparation that seems to be more and more advancing—that preparation expressed in the Apocalypse by the beautiful phrase, the bride making herself ready; that is, the church of Christ preparing for that great epoch when she will lay aside her own garments, and array herself in Easter robes; when she will leave behind her, her worn and wasted robes of decay, and put on her coronation dress, and be introduced to the king, and heaven and earth proclaim in songs, “the marriage of the Lamb is come, and the bride hath made herself ready.”

The British and Foreign Bible Society still continues to advance. It is most remarkable in the history of this institution that though there has been a wide-spread commercial convulsion in every nation in Europe, and poverty has overtaken so many, the receipts in 1859 were larger than at any former anniversary. In India its depôts were consumed, and hundreds of thousands of Bibles utterly destroyed; yet it seems to have gathered force from resistance, riches from losses, and to approximate in its action nearer than before to that day when, as its Apocalyptic symbol indicates—the angel holding in his hand the everlasting Gospel—shall go forth to carry it to all nations. With its increased funds it has instituted a special fund for circulating the word of God throughout the length and breadth of Bengal.

The various missionary societies that have recently held their anniversaries—the City Mission, with its home action among the crowds of city Arabs, as they are called, and convicts, and fallen, and, alas, forsaken and forgotten females in this metropolis; the Church Missionary Society, with its vast organization; that worthy society, first in the missionary field in 1793, the Baptist Missionary Society, the Wesleyan also, and the London Missionary Society—are more prosperous than usual. They have all come through years of great social and national distress to many; but the gold and the silver are the Lord's, and these have been poured into their coffers more largely and more liberally than at any former year of their history.

Another interesting trait in all recent anniversary missionary meetings is a tone of solemnity most refreshing. Sometimes one has been pained at being forced to hear humorous and hilarious declamations when the interests of souls, and the extension of a Saviour's name, were the great subjects. But lately, as if all felt that the time is short, that the day is far spent, and the night is at hand, every man seemed to speak with a deep sense of solemnity; not sadness or despondency, but solemnity suitable to the subject, and expressive of the deep feelings that Christian men entertain in this momentous crisis in the history of our country and of the world. It was also refreshing to notice at all the meetings no uncertain sound as to what the Gospel is. There was no sympathy expressed with that misty rationalism which has exhaled from the swamps of a portion of Germany, and floated on the winds into too many English and Scottish pulpits; a system that makes Christ a great feature, his death a grand example, but ignores the distinctive truth of living Christianity—Christ and him crucified, the only foundation of a sinner's hope. And there was as little sympathy expressed with that other system moving round the opposite pole, that borrows from the mint of Rome in order to improve the ecclesiastical currency of England; that mixes up the alloy of the Vatican with the pure gold, the unsearchable riches of Christ. In all the societies there was less rejoicing in the solitary crotchet that distinguishes the one from the other, and more rejoicing in the ninety-nine essential truths in which all are heartily agreed. There was also apparent in them all a far more hopeful feeling, and less expression of disappointment with results. They seemed to feel that promises, like the blossoms in spring, were ripening into fruit; and that prophecies long forgotten were beginning to pass into performance; and whilst there was nothing boastful, there was everything in their tone that was eminently hopeful. A century ago a Russian Czar set up a post, and inscribed upon the signboard, "The way to Constantinople!" and the

heart of Russia has had its polarity in that direction ever since. Eighteen hundred years ago there was set up on a hill in Palestine called Calvary a cross, and on that cross the Son of God was crucified; and over it there was unmistakeably written, "The way to heaven!" and the heart of Christendom feels it deeper, and is sustained by it more at this moment than it ever was before.

When we hear of missionaries speaking as if gold could convert the world, or talking as if they were putting off their uniform, instead of putting it on, it is too probable that there is no good done. But when we see a humble reliance on the Spirit of God; when there seems to be worked into their innermost experience the conviction that the victory will be obtained "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts;" and that the gold and silver are his, and that the work will be prospered by his blessing only, that blessing to be had by prayer, there is the augury of approaching and rapid success.

Such, then, is a *resumé* or sketch of the more striking incidents noticeable upon the surface of the various missionary meetings recently held in London in the month of May—the missionary month.

Let us turn to the obstructions that are being daily removed in all directions for the action of missions and the spread of the everlasting gospel. The most startling incident of 1858 was the vast revolution that took place in India; the disruption of that colossal superstition which has darkened the very sky, and crushed the liberty and oppressed the bodies of thousands—millions, rather, I should say—for so many generations past. It was the Hindoo belief that their system was about to die: they say at Benares there is a pillar which the Hindoo believes when it sinks into the earth, or becomes reduced to within a foot in height, attests that their religion is about to disappear. In some of the distant parts of India many of them were known to say to missionaries, "Come speedily," believing that their system was at an end, and that Christianity was now to supersede it. The Hindoos recently feared their

superstition was rapidly disappearing, and that we were the cause of its disappearance, and ought therefore to be extirpated from that peninsula. The Moslem, cherishing his ancient and unextinguished hate of Christianity, joined with the Hindoo, lashed into mutiny the fanatics of Bengal, and together they kindled that gigantic conflagration which has watered with sorrow many an English hearth, and left traces indelible till the judgment-day. But the result notwithstanding is the subversion of the very system they designed to prop up; the system itself is utterly disorganized; the nightmare of centuries is lifted up; and now there is hope in the consistent, fair, and upright conduct of our country, not establishing Christianity in India, for that would be, at present, a very great mistake, but while not disavowing Christianity, leaving it a fair field, and no political favour. There is, therefore, in India at this moment opened up a door for the entrance of missionaries and for the spread of the Gospel unprecedented since it became an appanage to the British crown. When the mutiny first broke out every paper said, "Lo! that is the effect of the missionaries;" they have lived, however, to recall the charge, and now it is demonstrable that just where missionary action was most successful, there peace has been least disturbed. The proud Brahmin we petted, and scarcely ventured to convert, not the miserable and degraded caste we were the means of bringing to Christ, has been the real disturber of that empire. There is a shaking and a breaking up throughout India at this moment that will leave a magnificent field for prudent, discreet, spiritually-minded, unpolitical missionaries, who will preach simply and earnestly the Gospel, and leave the dead of this world to bury their dead. In that spirit, and with these missionaries to enter India and sow the seeds of truth, there is no doubt we shall yet some of us live to see the golden sheaves of a glorious harvest, and thank God that while many a missionary sowed the seed with the tears of weeping eyes and with the blood of a warm heart, in God's good providence we have entered into their labour, and reaped where they sowed.

We may refer to another great empire which this convulsion, whatever it may prove, has also reached. China was the impenetrable land of past ages: there was no access to it; all inside was wrapped in mystery; a very few missionaries upon its outskirts and sea-board were all that laboured for the regeneration of hundreds of millions of human beings. By what has occurred a door of access has been secured; the missionary may now penetrate heretofore inaccessible fastnesses; we may live to hear of the Gospel sounding even in the streets of Peking. God grant that no wind may fill the folds of England's flag that does not reverberate with the words of England's Christianity; and that our British ships may never sail further, and that our armies may never penetrate where there shall not be a Bible in the hands of the colporteur, or the Gospel on the lips of the faithful missionary, to show the most benighted of the earth the way to heaven, to happiness, and to God. We used to think China an exception to the rest of the heathen nations; and many people reported they were such a lovely, sentimental, and delightful people, that they were evidence that a nation might be very good and very great, and yet not be Christian. But what is our discovery now? That China is not an exception to the Psalmist's statement, "The habitations of the heathen are full of horrid cruelty." This very amiable people, that had so many apologists amid sentimental latitudinarians, has been found out to be as depraved, as cruel, as impure as any Pagan tribe of savages we ever had to do with. We are thankful, not that they are so, but that the entrance of our armies and our ships has revealed what they are. It will only be a stronger incentive to carry into their homes, and their streets, and their temples, and their hearts that blessed Gospel which possesses the exclusive prerogative of instilling that righteousness that exalteth a nation.

Years ago I stated that the great river Euphrates, the symbol of the Mahometan power in Europe, was soon to be dried up, and that its drying up began under the

apocalyptic sixth vial, or about the year, as far as we can ascertain, 1821. Now, what has been its condition since? Read the history of the Moslem in Europe, and you will find that for the last thirty years the symbol in Scripture of the drying up of a river is the exact expression of what is taking place; and, singular enough, every effort to put the "sick man" upon his feet again has been like every prescription of an empiric—it has hastened his decay, and made his death more definite and near. At this moment, as is ascertained by the reports of the American missionaries in Turkey, the Turks are fugitives from Europe, crossing the Bosphorus, and seeking graves in Asia for themselves and their children; the crescent is waning in that sky that begins to brighten with the cross of the Galilean, destined to be the symbol, as it sets forth the only way of the salvation of mankind. The Turks are, many of them, appreciating Christianity as they never did before. In Palestine and Turkey, and at the sites of the Seven Churches of Asia, it is not the Mahometan but the Christian who is sunk deepest in superstition. If I had to choose between the Romanism of the Western Church and the superstition of the Russo-Greek Church, I should almost be tempted to take Mahometanism in preference; for with all the awful errors of the Mahometans they have never yet worshipped idols. It was the universal idolatry of Christendom that provoked God to suffer the Mahometan scourge. When the Mahometans see men bowing before idols, and pictures, and images, they see something they recoil from with all the instincts of their hearts. A Mahometan mosque is much more like what a Christian church should be than the Greek cathedrals, and churches, and chapels. And when the Mahometans saw for the first time the simple worship of the American Presbyterians, who have been the most successful missionaries there, they said, "Oh! but this is not Christianity, this is Protestantism;" they thought it was a totally different religion. Recently when the Church of England resolved, and most nobly resolved,

to build a church in Constantinople, it was laid down as the law of its existence that there must not be a bit of stained glass, nor a painting in a window, nor a picture of anything that can be construed into the likeness of anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. This is a most wise step, and it is our first step toward bringing the Mahometans to entertain the subject of Christianity; for as long as it is associated with idolatry, so long they recoil from what is so repugnant to all their deepest feelings. Mahometanism, however, is clearly disappearing, the crescent is waning—the Euphrates drying up, and converts are being daily made. The railway-whistle is heard in Smyrna; missionaries are preaching on its streets the everlasting Gospel, and all over the East there are those scattered rays that lead many a faithful watchman on the towers of Zion to say, “The morning cometh.” If we turn to Western Europe, we find the Papal nations in a state of bewilderment; every nation looks to every other with trepidation, many with dismay, and all seem to see on every part of the Continent the hopelessness of efforts to patch up and keep things quiet, and prevent the yet more fearful and expected explosion that rends Europe into atoms.

And what is the cause of this? Rebellion and insubordination are always sin; but that which is waking up the mind of nations to a new hope is the dissemination of God’s Word. The Bible Society is in one sense, but not an obnoxious one, the greatest revolutionist in Europe. Christianity is in one respect the greatest revolutionary action among nations; for in proportion as the peoples of Europe become acquainted with the contents of the Word of God, they will see that obedience to rulers, but struggles for truth and for liberty, are the duties of enlightened Christians. Few fail to see that the Papal system has been smitten with a stroke that reverberates throughout the length and breadth of Christendom. Those not remote events—the Papal aggression, the Austrian concordat—were merely the spasmodic clutches of a dying power

to avert a doom that is absolutely inevitable. The vicar and representative of Christ has been long shored up by two timbers, and now one of these timbers is gone and the other cracks the heavier he leans upon it; till at length the certainty of utter desolation and destruction stares the trembling pontiff in the face. In the city of Rome, there is a priest for every seventy people, a teacher of some sort for every thirty people; there are three hundred and sixty-five churches in a city with a population not equal to that of Edinburgh; so that if the people are disloyal it cannot be from want of the means of teaching them the religion of the country, for it is most effectually taught and brought home to every man's bosom and business. In London we have not a teacher of any sort for every ten thousand people; so that if London were the most disloyal and tumultuous city in Christendom you might say it is not the fault of the religion, but the want of means to bring it home to the people of London; yet it is peaceful, celebrating the anniversaries of its great missionary institutions in peace—as a whole, fearing God, and loyal to our beloved Queen. But in Rome the people are restless, watching every moment for a chance to send about his business the vicar of Christ, the infallible teacher of Christendom. There is evidence irresistible that one-third of them are Protestants, that another third of them are disloyal, and that all of them would be thankful to be rid of him who is the centre stone of Papal Christendom, the great ruler of the world, and who professes to speak infallible truths, and to rule with infallible results. The magic of the name is gone—the spell is dissolved; and during the last fifty years, literally nine hundred thousand of the clergy and teachers of the Church of Rome all over Asia, America, and Europe have fallen away.

How shall we explain all this agitation in India, in Mahometan countries, and all over Papal Europe? How can we explain this vibration of continents, this waking up of millions from the sleep of ages—this upheaving of deep foundations—this unsettled and dis-

contented state which makes men yearn, and long, and cry, some of them in agony, for calm, for consolation, and for peace? Visions of approaching revolution are passing at noon and night through Vatican, Congress, and Divan; the wheels of time seem to revolve with more terrible rapidity—the lines of Providence seem to converge as if approaching some crisis of great intensity. We Christians know the result and wait patiently: though the earth be removed, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, we will not fear; for we have a river whose streams make glad the city of our God. Sometimes the ocean is stirred by subterranean volcanic action to its very depths; no vessel can approach the scene while the disturbance lasts; we wait a few weeks, and after the convulsion has ceased, a beautiful isle emerges from the water and sleeps on the bosom of the deep: by-and-by it is clothed with verdure and fragrant with flowers, and there is heard in it the hum of a busy capital and the songs of happy Christian men. So will it be when this great seething, this great shaking of the nations of the earth has ceased. There will emerge from it, by a regeneration more magnificent than the genesis of old, a “better country,” a “city that hath foundations,” that shall never be disturbed by a storm, agitated by a revolution, or torn by the chariot-wheels of war.

Let us notice amid these convulsions the evidence of the Christian Church making herself ready. The Gospel moves over all terrestrial lines with increasing speed. This the reports of Missionary Institutions show, everywhere and always throughout the world. Our religion spreads with a never-retreating and an ever-extending empire. Christianity makes no compromise, and offers no armistice; and yet in sunshine and in shadow, in storm and in calm, it continues to advance; and the record of to-day is Christian converts still added to the Church of such as shall be saved. We see another feature also very interesting, in increased additions to the funds of the Bible and Missionary Institutions of our country. It seems as if Australia and California

had been discovered for this purpose : it begins literally to be fulfilled as was said in ancient prophecy, "To Christ shall be given of the gold of Sheba." While there have been such losses, and so severe fiscal and financial convulsions, as we have referred to, missions have maintained more than their usual prosperity, and their progress has been wider and further than before. We see another striking preparation for the universal spread of the Gospel, in the compression of the earth into the dimensions almost of a manageable little kingdom. Edinburgh and Glasgow are as near to London in 1860, as Birmingham was in 1830. New York is nearer London to-day than Inverness was half a century ago. What is this for? It is God dissolving the barrier of distance ; it is an approach to the predicted era in the Apocalypse, when there shall be "no more sea;" great continents are becoming neighbours, vast capitals are grouped and clustered together. Wherefore? Not for enriching men, but for saving souls. The mysterious whispering-wire is connecting the most distant capitals of Asia, of America, and I may add Africa, and Europe ; may it not be that it also is given in Providence, that it may be sanctified by grace, and made an instrument of good? I delight to look upon the multiplying brilliant discoveries of science, as preparations for a grand issue, as the acts approaching the fifth of a magnificent drama ; as the tuning of the instruments preparatory to a grand and glorious jubilee.

Nor is what is now taking place in America, and Ireland also, unsuggestive. Our American brethren, like ourselves, have many peculiarities ; some we do not like. We do not prefer their form of government, nor some of their stereotyped courtesies ; but still they are a magnificent nation ; and one earnestly prays that the two great Protestant nations of the earth—Great Britain and America—may long live and love, sisters in arms, rivals only in renown. Suddenly a wave seems to have swept from one end of the continent of America to the other ; and churches, chapels—Presbyterian, Episcopa-

lian, Independent, Baptist, Wesleyan—have been filled every day to overflowing; till halls, and rooms, and even theatres were seized and crowded with people, that met together to pray, under a sense of deep wants. So impressive has been the spectacle presented by America, that the Jews have crowded into Christian temples; and more Jews have been baptized during the last twelve months, than probably for a hundred years before in America. And what is so remarkable, the Roman Catholic papers of America furnish the most striking proof of all: "Whatever these people may be, and whatever may be in this matter, that a tremendous change of great depth and solemnity has passed upon all the population, is manifest and undeniable." What is no less remarkable, those petty things about which Christians squabble are all fused or dissipated in the heat and warmth of this—shall I call it? Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit of God. Episcopalians, and Presbyterians, and Independents, have met and worshipped in the same place, and in each other's churches, forgetting the little things which after all divide us, and rejoicing in the magnificent things which throughout eternity will unite us. Let us, however, recollect, that whenever we see forged money, it proves that there is good coin in existence; there cannot be a counterfeit unless there preceded a real article also. Whenever there is a work of God, the devil will get up an imitation of it. The goldsmith cannot work gold without alloy: we cannot yet have a perfect work of God upon the earth. What we want is a little charity, to see the predominating goodness in every Christian, and to forgive his little defects, to forget his oddity in his great work; and not to deny it because we see grievous declensions in the midst of it. But, taking it as it stands, what judgment can we form? Men in New York and in Belfast have left their shops, the market, the counting-house, and gone day after day, during so many hours, to pray; and persons that never thought of religion have been overwhelmed by a sense of the startling magnifi-

cence of the crisis. God grant that the clouds that have broken in such sweet 'showers upon America and Ireland may revisit our country; and that we may have all the excellence that is there, with none of its defects.

I look upon these things as proofs of the first shaking of the nations, preparatory to a great issue. Blessed hope; happy expectancy! Pagans that know nothing of the Gospel will soon begin to believe it; deserts that are unbeautified by a single floweret shall soon blossom like the rose; oceans on which is said no prayer, and sung no hymn, shall soon be vocal with the praise of the King of kings. Homes that have no worship, and hearts that have no love, shall not be strangers to it any more; truth shall follow truth, and joy shall multiply upon joy, as star flashes upon star on a clear frosty evening, until the whole heavens are telling forth the glory and the praise of God. For, "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and for the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name and for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off. This must one day be; when it shall be, I am no prophet, and cannot predict; but that the signs of the approaching era are thick and multiplied around us is what a reflecting mind cannot deny. But why should we be sorry when it comes? Can you be sorry that you shall be happy; sorry that there shall be no more headaches, nor heartaches, nor tears, nor crying? Sorry that all the devil's triumphs shall be expunged, sin's havoc put an end to; and that glorious morning dawn when the whole earth shall be covered with the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the channels of the great deep?

LECTURE IV.

THINGS COMING ON THE EARTH.

The Great Prophet of the Church predicts, as premonitory of the closing days of our present Economy, earthquakes, and famines, and pestilences, and also

“ Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”—MATTHEW xxiv. 12.

EVIDENCES of our approaching the Saturday evening of the world's long week multiply on every side: the shadows of twilight begin to gather from every point of the horizon; and hence the warning cry should become more imminent, urgent, and emphatic than ever, “ The Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.” I dare not speak in the language of dogmatism, or rashness, where human frailty has so often foundered, and human imperfection has been so often illustrated. I may, however, refer to acknowledged facts as presignificant signs of the beginning of the Great Tribulation. What is all history? Prophecy passing from the past into the present. What are Alison and Macaulay; what are the newspapers that appear every morning? Simply amanuenses in providence, unconsciously recording what God has predicted in his inspired Word; so that we seeing the prophecy of what shall be, and reading the unconscious record by men who do not think of the prophecy of what is, are constrained to feel, “ O God, thy word is truth.” An early sprinkling of this predicted baptism of sorrows is “ nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” It is not difficult to particularize in 1859. Look around—after a peace of forty years, secured by the genius of that great hero whose

name has become a household word—dark and sombre shadows began to creep up and the war-clouds to gather and deepen in intensity, and statesmen to prophesy disaster. At length it burst upon the shores of the Euxine, and in the heart of the Crimea, in unprecedented terror and fury; and a war commenced and closed, accompanied by horrors personal and physical on earth and ocean, of portentous significance—men's hearts failing for fear. We were no sooner relieved from that war, than news arrived as predicted in Ezekiel xxxviii., xxxix., that Russia is moving eastward as rapidly as it can; at war, its old war, with the Circassians, embroiling us with Persia, and ever seeking and searching a pathway to our Indian possessions: we have no sooner settled in some degree into quiet, if quiet it can be called, than we find ourselves at war with the colossal empire of China; a war chronic, but no less remarkable and suggestive, when viewed in connection with prophecy. During the last seven years we have heard of that empire dividing into twain, from internal causes. It is most singular that some of the ablest commentators upon prophecy have the impression that all the Ten Tribes are in China; that the land of Sin into which they were carried, or the land of China, may contain the ancient Ten Tribes, of whose history and existence we have had no record for the last two thousand years: this may be error. Whether the Chinese war was right or wrong, expedient or not, it is not my province to pronounce; I speak of it as a fact; what is the issue of it? The opening of an impenetrable empire to the glorious Gospel, and the approach of preachers of the truth to Peking itself. The rebels are prepared to hear, for they have in some way picked up a knowledge of the Gospel perfectly marvellous. While much has occurred that some may deplore, and much may have taken place that some may differ from; yet I have not the least doubt that, as in olden times, the sword is the dread pioneer of the olive-tree. That kingdom must be convulsed by war before it overflow with those rivers that make glad the city of our God; or see erected

in its bosom that kingdom which is righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost. What an awful, piercing, and heartrending fulfilment of this prophecy has been sweeping over India! What atrocities, what sufferings, what desolating judgments are on the earth! Those that derided the reiterating warnings I had so long given, recognised the solemnity and awfulness of the year 1857. All Europe watched each act of that Eastern tragedy, itself a seething volcano. Turn next to Italy. A war was kindled, the ultimate limits of which no man can guess. Every nation trembles—there are lulls, but there is no peace,—and all the nations of Europe learn, amid the sprinklings of the last vial, that prophecy has passed into fact, “Nation rising up against nation, and kingdom rising against kingdom.” The “Times” observes,—“The chronicles of the last forty-two years are fresh in the minds of all, and how many of those forty-two years have not been mainly illustrated or ensanguined with the military achievements of one nation or another? It has been the fashion to speak of forty years at least of this period as years of peace—but what peace! Now the Spanish and now the Italian Peninsula has been red with the blood of contending armies; now the Turkish fleet has been sunk beneath the quiet waters of Navarin; and now the Russian hordes have perished like flies in the autumn time, as with ever-diminishing strength they staggered on to the diplomatic haven of Adrianople. At one time the cause of ‘liberty,’ at another that of ‘order,’ has been effectually vindicated at Paris, as the red gutters of the time could show; at another ‘tranquillity,’ that Russian idol, was enthroned at Warsaw in a very solemn way. The smoke of the opposing cannon has scarcely yet curled away from off the wide Hungarian swamps. Need we speak of England’s share in these peaceful transactions? The North-Western Provinces of India, the banks of the Indus and of the Irrawaddy, have been the witnesses of our military glory. The fleets and armies of this country have already dealt one downright blow at the power

of the Tartar dynasty in China, and even now the sword of England is bared, and about to fall in the same quarter with sharper effect. The story of the great contest which was waged in the Crimea may be passed over with but a passing remark, for that is generally admitted to be a stern parenthesis in the loving records of the nineteenth century. The French, however, for twenty-five years of that time have been steadily occupied in pursuing the African hordes from one mountain pass to another, while at the other extremity of that great continent we ourselves have waged two contests of extermination amid the bush of Caffreland. So far of the peaceful history of the Old World. In the New, peace can scarcely be said to have reigned during the piping times of that murderous miser Francia, in Paraguay; nor precisely along the course and at the mouth of the River Plate; nor among the republics on the Pacific sea-board of South America; nor in Mexico, where of late the sturdy pioneers of the Northern States drove before them the hybrid population of that lovely region, pretty much as of old the steel-clad followers of Cortez swept before them the Indian hosts, as the wind might have swept away the feathers with which they were adorned. It is idle to talk of peace in the past, and a dream to reckon upon it in the future."

We are told also that preliminary to the great period there shall also be "famines in divers places." I will not specify, lest I should be accused of dogmatizing, where positive assertion is so difficult; but is it not fact that during the last ten years, not in one country, but in every country, not even excepting America, famines have prevailed to a very great extent? Ireland was almost desolated by one; and our own expenditure and taxation exceedingly increased in consequence. The fairest lands of Europe have recently felt the effects of famine, and failure of the harvest, and deficiency of the crops. India moves from war to famine. The money-market of America was convulsed; there was bread, but no money. Our own country also felt the storm. There

“shall be pestilences in divers places.” In 1849 a pestilence burst upon England, travelling from the East through Germany and Austria to our shores; and instead of the average mortality being about a thousand, it rose to three thousand per week. In 1854 it returned, and fell upon some districts of the country with fearful fury; in Golden Square it fell like the blast of the pestilence itself, where men, strong at ten o'clock in the evening, were carried out to be buried at twelve o'clock. And the morbid agencies which originated that pestilence are still in the air. Some unknown and peculiar type of it prevailed on the shores of France last autumn, carrying off whole families at a stroke, and on the shores of our own country creating sad havoc: pestilences smiting the vine, the roots of the earth, the corn in the field, the cattle also, among which they are now talking about the introduction of a new type of disease. It looks like all the plagues of Egypt crowding into the last half of the nineteenth century; giving token that the dread mysterious vial has been poured out into the air, and nations own by their painful experience that God's predictions are truth. Again, it is said there shall also be “earthquakes in divers places.” During the last three years there have been more earthquakes than during any twenty-five years of the last eighteen centuries; and some of these attended with such desolating effects that capitals have been swallowed up, whole cities reduced to ruins, thousands of the population destroyed.

From the “Times” of December 30, 1857, I take the following extract:—

“NAPLES, *December 22.*

“The reports which have been received of the damages occasioned by the earthquake since I wrote are of the most alarming and disastrous character. I shall for the present confine myself to the details given by the official journal. The private information—under the circumstances, perhaps, approaching nearer the truth—reports the disasters to be far greater. At

Bari the two awful shocks on the night of the 16th had crushed the barracks of gendarmes and filled the people with terror, who passed the night in the open air. At Ricigliano, a commune of Campagna, ten houses had fallen, five or six persons had been dug out of the ruins, and two persons had been killed. In Caposelle and Senerchia a man and a child had their legs broken in attempting to escape. In many other communes, houses and churches had been split, and the cupola of the church of St. Gregory had fallen in. On Saturday morning two shocks had been felt at six and ten o'clock A.M., and staircases had fallen, while many of the houses had fissures in them. Potenza, the capital of Basilicata, however, and the neighbourhood seem to have suffered more than any other part. The shocks there were continuous, and not a single house remains which is habitable. Now Potenza possesses a population of upwards of twelve thousand souls. The palace of the prefecture, the military and civil hospital, the barracks of gendarmes and of the reserve, the college of Jesuits, the churches, and especially the cathedral, are all rendered useless, and 'no one can, without danger, cross his own doorway.' They were continuing to disinter the numerous victims, the number of whom was unknown. The whole population, who had been in the open air, were beginning to take shelter in wooden barracks erected for the purpose. From other parts of the province very afflicting news had arrived. Tito (a township of near ten thousand souls, near Potenza), Marsico Nuovo, Laurenzana, and Brienza were almost entirely destroyed. Two-thirds of Vignola had perished. Immense are the disasters in Viggiano, Calvello, Auzi, and Abriola; and more than immense is the terror and desolation of the inhabitants. The pen falls horror-struck from one's hand, so says the Government reporter. With regard to Naples, several lighter shocks had occurred after the severe ones of Wednesday night; but on Saturday, at five and half-past six o'clock P.M., others were felt, which in some parts raised the fearful cry of 'Earthquake! Earth-

quake !' and again a great number of persons rushed into the streets. The movement appeared to be almost vertical, as the ground swelled beneath my feet, and the table rose and fell. The same scenes might have been witnessed as those I described in my last, and again, for the fourth night, many people spent the night in their carriages in the open squares. On Sunday morning, at ten o'clock, another shock was felt, slight indeed, but sufficient to alarm, and to lead to the idea almost that the earth was in a continual state of vibration. The Government has sent assistance in beds, medicine, lint, food, nurses, and wood for barracks to the site of the disasters, as also engineers, to see what can be done to repair and restore.

" I have been told, however, that one or two of the intendants have come up to say that the orders of the Government to throw open the communal treasuries cannot be obeyed, as in many instances no cash remained; the drain has been too great for other purposes. I shall give later in my letter any further reports which may arrive.

" I mentioned a short time since that General Sabatelli had gone through the course of the Puglia railway, as royal commissioner, to enforce the payment of arrears on shares, and to encourage fresh subscriptions. His success is said to have been very considerable.

" Fresh information from the scene of the recent disasters has just arrived. I give it as official, promising by saying that according to general belief the actual amount of destruction has been much greater.

" The ruinous violence of the recent earthquake appears to have been limited to the two provinces of the Principato Sutiore and Basilicata. Up to the 18th, nineteen bodies had been dug up in Potenza, and more were being sought for; three hundred had been dug out of Polla. Montefusco, the corporal of gendarmerie, was taken out alive; so also was the judge of Saponara, but his wife and two children perished beneath the ruins, from which he was dragged smashed and crippled. Lagonegro, on the same night, experi-

enced three shocks in seven hours. None of the inhabitants perished, but almost all the buildings, as well public as private, were cracked, and three are falling, among which are the church of the Capuchins, and the electric station. The shocks continued up to yesterday at this point, though they were slight. The entire population were living in barracks hastily erected in the middle of a great plain. In the commune of Carboni twenty-one have perished, and nineteen have been wounded, not to speak of the damage done to the buildings. In Castelsano, which is nearly levelled with the ground, four hundred persons have perished. The same misfortune has happened to Sarconi, where thirty persons have been killed. The other communes of the district of Lagonegro which have suffered damage in the houses generally, and particularly in the churches, and from which no returns of the dead have been made, are, Maratea, Lauria, Castelluccio, Rotonda, Vigianello, Sant' Arcangelo, Calvera, San Martino, Castro Nuovo, and Senise. From the remaining communes of the district no intelligence had as yet been received. It is impossible, therefore, to calculate the number of the dead. The popular voice makes it amount to many thousands. I have heard as many as fifteen thousand, even twenty-two thousand, stated. It is very clear that, according to official information, several thousands must have perished. Commissions have been formed in all the suffering localities for the relief of the suffering. Government has sent down fresh supplies of beds, linen, and wood for the construction of barracks. Telegraphic communication had been re-established as far as was possible. Nurses, sisters of charity, and priests had also been sent down, and everything was being done for the comfort of the many thousands who, not only from fear, but from necessity, are now encamped in the open air. Persons who have fled from the awful scenes, and have arrived in the capital, give yet more heartrending details; but the official journal evidently fears the effect of them upon the public mind. No sooner was the shock of last Saturday felt than a horde

of thieves and assassins rushed towards the Toledo, but the gendarmes soon put them down with their drawn swords. All is now quiet, and the weather, which has at last taken a turn, inspires people with more hope and courage; still shocks are not unfrequent, and twice since I began this letter have I felt them. It is a feature in the state of things not to be omitted in this painful narrative, that the lottery-offices all last week were placarded with favourite combinations of figures, and that the people rushed eagerly to play. Again, another phase of the national mind was exhibited in the superstitious agony with which all called upon the saints for protection, and, above all, in the reported miracle by their favourite protector St. Januarius. His blood is said to have boiled, to have been examined by the authorities, and a procession was thereupon formed, in which an image was carried; so I have been told this morning.

“This letter must not leave without my adding, that in these painful circumstances the Government has acted with considerable promptitude in relieving the sufferings of the unfortunate people, and with equal promptitude and moderation in preserving public order.

“*December 23.*

“I had no sooner finished my letter of yesterday than many were alarmed by another shock of an earthquake. ‘Resina,’ says a resident, ‘is in a continual state of vibration, and so will be the whole country probably for some time to come.’ Some families have left Naples in consequence, and others have been resolving to do so; but such a step appears to me to be one of great folly, for on the principle that a road is never so safe as after a robbery, so Naples is now doubly assured. This city, too, has never within record suffered any great disasters from earthquakes, though they have desolated the neighbourhood. Vesuvius is doubtless a great protection to us. On the night of the earthquake, and shortly after, a large opening was made at the bottom of the cone, and a great quantity

of smoke and stones were ejected; ever since, it has been unusually active.

"I hasten to send you the report which the Government published last night, of intelligence from the scene of ruin. It justifies all that I have said of the indisposition of the Government to tell the whole truth, and as to the probability of private reports being true. 'The mind,' says the official writer, 'shudders to contemplate the details—they surpass beyond measure what has already been published.' In Polla alone, two thousand victims had been disinterred, and they were still at work. Pertosa, Atessa, Auletta, entirely destroyed, suffered next after Polla. Then Padula and St. Pietro, and afterwards Sala, Diano, Sassano, Montesanto, S. Arsenio, and Sapri. In all these places the number of dead as yet brought to light is two thousand six hundred! The official journal cannot and will not enter into details, but mentions Melfi, Barile, Avella, Venosa, in the Basilicata, where houses and churches were thrown down, and people killed and wounded.

"The same of Vallo, Matera, Majori, and Tramonti, in Principato Citeriore. Intelligence had been received from the province of Bari, but not given. Canosa suffered deplorable disasters, but they are not narrated. In Principato Ulteriore, houses were thrown down and people wounded. Abruzzo Ulteriore Secundo suffered less; the same may be said of Capitanata, Molise, and the three Calabrias. I believe the disaster is vastly greater than we have any idea of; but take only the admissions of the 'official journal,' and yet how awful! It was on Sunday last that the reputed miracle in the blood of St. Januarius took place, and that the procession walked."

Naples is not the last sufferer. A slight vibration once or twice, as in Cornwall, January, 1860, touched our own shores, indicating one of the signs of the beginning of sorrows. I know an objection that occurs in many minds. They say, "But there always have been wars; there always have been famines; not a

century has passed away without there being 'earthquakes in divers places.'" This proves too much, because it would prove that our Lord's prediction is absurd; if it be not a characteristic sign of the end, then the prediction is altogether pointless, and nothing can ever satisfy us that this prediction has passed into fulfilment, because the constant reply will be, "There have always been earthquakes, there have always been famines, and there have always been wars." Jesus knew these facts and phenomena, as characteristic of every age, at least as well as we do; and yet, knowing this, he predicts them as a presignificant sign of the end; and pestilences, earthquakes in divers places, as the beginning of sorrows. The distinctive peculiarity of the fulfilment of such prophecies would seem, therefore, to be, that all these shall come in clusters, and in rapid succession, or with simultaneous effects in various parts of the world, and within a very limited period. And as soon, therefore, as these signs come to be concentrated, and exhibited in clusters, and in rapid succession, we may conclude, not that the end is now come, but that the beginning of sorrows, the birth-pangs of nature are begun, introductory of that birth of a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. I know well that all that can occur will be explained by the man of science as perfectly natural. Men tried to explain the cholera: one said, "It is the want of ozone in the air;" another said, "It is a sort of magnetic influence in the earth;" another said, "It is a severe epidemic borne hither by the wind;" but they were just as wise at the end as they were at the beginning, that is, they knew nothing about it. When an earthquake rocks us, many will say, "It is only the gaseous element that has become too powerful for the crust of the earth, and has caused an explosion;" and when a famine comes, they will show you the insect by the microscope that causes it; but all this is only tracing phenomena a step higher. Who sent this insect? who sent this gas in the earth? who inflicted this pestilence? You do not solve the difficulty, while

you only encourage the atheistic feeling which vents itself in the language of St. Peter: "Where is the promise of his coming, for all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation?" while forgetting that as a snare shall it come upon them that dwell upon the face of the earth. These are the presignificant signs of the approaching twilight of this present dispensation; or what our Lord calls, in the eighth verse, "the beginning of sorrows."

Our Lord next states what is one of the great moral presignificant signs, to which I proceed to call attention, namely, that "iniquity shall abound;" and therefore, as the result of it, "the love of many shall wax cold." But, can it be said at the present day that iniquity abounds? Before proceeding to answer this question, I must admit that truth abounds, piety abounds, pure and lofty morality abounds. One thanks God for it; and we pray that these things may increase more and more. But the characteristic of the end will be an intenser exhibition of true morality by the Lord's people, and contemporaneously an intenser exhibition of degeneracy, and wickedness, by others. As far as we can interpret the age in which we live, society seems splitting into two great sections. Tractarianism, Puseyism, Jesuitism, concentrating around Antichrist as their congenial centre; all true religion, whether in Church or Dissent, concentrating around Christ Jesus as our living and our glorious Head; men who are truly Christians becoming more intensely so, and men who are thoroughly worldly becoming more intensely so; shams and masks scattered to the winds, and all standing out in sharpest relief either as Satan has tempted them or as God's grace has transformed them. If so, we may expect that iniquity will abound. Let us notice some spheres in which it is impossible to deny that iniquity does abound. Begin first with the visible Church in every branch throughout the United Kingdom: in one section, presentations to benefices are sold to the highest bidder, and advertised in the newspaper; rights the most sacred prostituted to party or personal

predilections: in another section, internecine disputes about the appointment of ministers, ending in separation, alienated feeling, envies, jealousies, and all uncharitableness, injurious to practical religion. Here we see the growth of a dark and deadly superstition, there a system of rationalism pervading numbers of preachers, and true religion pining, or perishing, or excommunicated from many whose morning promised a brighter and a nobler day. I do not deny that there are signs of the Tractarian system, which was so deadly and so dark, not disappearing, but at least going to its own place; and no one, to whatever section of the Church he belongs, can hesitate to bless God for recent episcopal appointments, as of "light at evening time;" in which men are selected for the chief places in the Church of England, not because their antecedents have been noble, nor because they are very learned, nor because they are men that have minded nothing, and troubled nobody, and are good enough to be Bishops, but for their piety and usefulness. But one can see the correlative of this no less forcibly defined in other parts of the country, where we find churches turned into camps, sickles beaten into swords, zeal burning where there should be indifference, and indifference freezing where there should be burning and enthusiastic zeal. I do not like to find fault and fulminate censure; but one can see, with the increase of true religion in every section of the Church, a corresponding increase of superstition, of scepticism, of infidelity, of apathy, sufficient at least to justify the prophecy of iniquity abounding in the Church. If we turn to another department—the State—is there no iniquity there in high places also? How often do we see the ascendancy of party valued far more than the ascendancy of great principles; how frequently do we witness patriotism sacrificed to party, and men more anxious about who shall rule than what shall rule and dominate? If we pass into the warehouses, the countinghouses, the shops, the markets, the marts of merchandize, what do we witness there? Is not the competition of commercial life at

the present day more or less marked by one deep brand, making haste to be rich? Is not the great anxiety in some of our houses of business what shall bring the quickest return, and how they shall obtain the largest profits? Speaking to commercial men, let me ask, in an affectionate spirit of sympathy, would your ledgers and account-books bear to be inspected by God, and judged according to the maxims of the sanctuary, not according to the aphorisms of trade? What your neighbours do never can justify wrongdoing on your parts. No inveteracy of precedent can ever be a warrant for iniquity and injustice. No doubt, there are merchants in our country and tradesmen who are content to be honestly poor rather than to be iniquitously rich; such men are beautiful before God, ornaments and blessings to the market, and indeed to mankind. But when one reads of the scenes that recently appeared, of fearful crimes and dishonesties that burst forth in quarters where they were least expected, shall I be uncharitable if I express my fear that these were incidental ebullitions of a state of things seething and corrupting below, of which other evidences and exponents will appear? If we turn to social life, is there no abounding of iniquity there? Deeds of violence, thought to be the characteristics of barbarous times, are, alas! too characteristic of civilization: divorces, murders, and appalling social crimes are not incidental, but continuous. You cannot look into the east end of this great metropolis without seeing a contrast that shames, and should rebuke, and ought to awaken the sympathies of the west end. Read, as all sometimes, I dare say, do, the wills proved in the courts appropriated for that purpose; read in the newspapers of men dying fabulously rich, possessed of sums one can scarcely realize; and at their very doors, and whilst they have been amassing these vast sums, lie pinching poverty, pining disease, miserable children nursed in the lap of crime, and ripening for the penal colony and for the judgment-seat of God. May not the crimes of the lower classes be retribution on the heads of the higher? May not the

deepening sense of the precariousness of property which the crimes of many have generated be a call to those who have neglected the perishing and the destitute to feel more sympathy and to do something to succour and relieve them? You never can wind a chain around the hand of another without winding the opposite end around your own; you never can do wrong without suffering wrong; you never can suffer ignorance, and crime, and iniquity, to grow up like weeds at your door without the atmosphere that you breathe being sooner or later poisoned by them. It is most melancholy that, while men are fighting about systems of education, thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands, are passing to the judgment-seat of Christ that literally do not know their right hand from their left, and have no fear of God and no reverence of mankind. In the midst of all this—I repeat it again—men die unprecedentedly rich. I should not like to die worth two or three hundred thousand pounds. What an awful thought, to have had so much wealth in a world where so many mouths want bread, and so much poverty and so dark ignorance and so bitter misery are festering at your very threshold! In vain have we renounced the Pope, in vain have we beaten the Czar, if we are now the victims of Pope Mammon, and the serfs of a Czar more terrible than the Autocrat of all the Russias—imperious and insatiable Self. Iniquity abounds in social life. Avarice grows strong beside pining hunger, and man, apparently thinks that the chief end of man is not, as our good old-fashioned Catechism says, “to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever,” but to make a fortune, secondly, to make a will, and leave your money to heirs, however remote. That man is not most to be admired who comes into the world born to riches, or to rank, or to greatness; but he who goes out of the world over whose grave thousands shall stand and say, “He made many a heart happier by his munificence, his liberality, and goodness.” An excessive homage is given to wealth in the present day. Is not money made, in the City at least, and I fear in the West-end

too, if it would acknowledge it, the test of respectability? Is not the first inquiry about every man, not what he is, but what he has? Do not men often test character not by the creed, not by the moral conduct, but by the balance in the banker's hands? Surely, surely, nothing is more degrading than to admire and respect a man because, not by his own merits, but by the aid of others, he is accidentally rich. There is something chivalrous and noble in showing due reverence to ancient antecedents, to historic greatness, dignity, and descent; but there is nothing but all that is mean and unworthy in worshipping gold, and shouting hosannas to him who is simply the lucky possessor of it. It is not purple, it is not fine linen, but men who fear God, who love their brothers as themselves, that are the strength of cities, the ornaments of the Church, and are entitled to our veneration and esteem. Honour is due to a good man who sweeps a crossing; only pity to a man who is rich in this world's wealth; but poor towards God. Integrity in rags is beautiful: Vice, in purple and fine linen, ought to be execrated with all the energy of hearts that love God and admire the character that reflects his glory.

We see iniquity abounding, too, in those forms which have been recently exposed where there has been loud profession, vast pretence, ostentatious parade, aid given to every charity connected with religion and beneficence, but all these made to cover designs incompatible with the will of God and inconsistent with the character of a true Christian. How many will rob their employers in order that they may appear in the class of those whose outward appearance seems to indicate their occupying the high and brighter levels of the world! Fashion is the Sinai and the Gerizzim of some, the law and gospel of others; and to have equipage, and pomp, and splendour, and retinue, they will be selfish towards the poor, unjust towards their employers, dishonest, and ultimately, as recent events have shown, turn out convicted felons, because they sacrificed their duties towards God to their miserable and contemptible thirst for gaud, and

show, and equipage. While I would not needlessly brand our age, one cannot but acknowledge that there is a great deal wrong, that there is much room for prayer for the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit, and for that transforming influence which one day God will give to His Church, when she has cried and sighed because of the abominations that are done in the land.

But if we look abroad to other lands, to Spain, the land of historic greatness, the people that are above the soil seem almost as dead as the people that are below. Italy, long crushed and held down in darkness and the shadow of death, unable to endure longer, lifts up its hands and strikes for freedom. How many of her dungeons still echo with the groans of the crushed and the oppressed! How deplorable that state of things where civil liberty is crime, where religious liberty is heresy, and where the circulation of a Bible, or the assertion that you believe it, is visited by the inspection of the police, and probably with imprisonment for years or for life. If we take the picture of France, sketched by one of its bishops the other day, what a terrible state is hers! what ignorance! You speak of France being Roman Catholic; the fact is, it is no such thing. The last statistics show that out of six and-thirty millions inhabiting France, there are only two millions that go to confession and take the sacrament in the Church of Rome. What does that prove? By the laws of the Church of Rome, if any one does not go to confession and take the sacrament once a year, he is, *ipso facto*, excommunicated; so that upwards of twenty millions are excommunicated by this alone from the Roman Catholic Church. It is not a Roman Catholic country—it is, to a very great extent, I fear, a sceptical country. Austria is the great dungeon of Europe. In Russia, the great mass are slaves, and the few over them are tyrants; and scenes are enacted there and deeds done, at which humanity must shudder, and from which religion cannot but recoil. But we are told by an Apostle that all this we are to expect; for, says Paul, "This know, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be

lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Such is the dark catalogue of those who are to live in the last days.

Now, what is the result of this upon the Christian Church? That "the love of many shall wax cold." God's people suffering from those that are his enemies discourage those Christian people that are witnesses of the scene. Seeing Christianity clad in a sackcloth, many a Judas betraying with a kiss, many a Demas forsaking, having loved this present world, true Christians come to be discouraged, and begin like David in the seventy-third Psalm to doubt if there be a God, if there be a Providence, if the ways of righteousness, after all, be ways of pleasantness, and of peace. And then, the last days will load the whole atmosphere with social evil; Christian people breathing that atmosphere will be infected and tainted by it. Who does not know that if you go and live in Paris, or in Vienna, or in some other corrupt capital, insensibly its moral influence contaminates you? You go there resolved to maintain the sacredness of the Sabbath, to keep up your habits of public worship, to read your Bible, to avoid what is sinful, but insensibly and imperceptibly the warmth of your own Christian character evaporates or goes down to the zero of the atmosphere you are obliged to breathe; and you find it literally true that the abundance of social immorality around you makes your love to God in your own heart begin to grow cold. And how does this cooling love exhibit itself? In less sense of the value of Christian truth, of the necessity of pure and scriptural doctrine, and in the popular feeling becoming predominant—it does not matter what a man believes if his life only be right: a maxim as scripturally unholy as it is logically untrue and absurd. This cooling love shows itself in less love to the

house of God, less desire to listen to the preaching of the Gospel: little things will prevent you occupying the accustomed place, and many things about which you are troubled will deaden and diminish the effects of the great truths that you hear preached and addressed to you. Another effect of this cooling love will be less given, less done to spread the Gospel, to educate the ignorant, and to do good among all that are about you. And as prayer is the very breath of the Christian life, there will be less prayer, less sense of the need of it, less frequent and fervent appeal to God that He would pour out his Spirit upon you, and raise your love to the height it once stood at, and make you zealous in all that is holy, and just, and beneficent, and good. Let us then pray, that if iniquity be abounding, our love may be preserved in its morning warmth and purity notwithstanding; let us pray that the Spirit of God would quicken our dead hearts, would warm our cold affections; and would enable us, in this chill, freezing atmosphere of an atheistic world, to maintain that warmth and glow of spiritual life which God will keep burning until it mingle with the splendours and the glories of everlasting day.

What is wanted, therefore, on all sides is intense sympathy with truth, intense love to God, fervent prayer for the pouring out of his Holy Spirit, and the conviction deepening and growing that religion is a reality; that what I am speaking is not fancy, is not fable, but a solemn and an efficacious truth. Do you love God? Is that love shed abroad in your hearts? May we be preserved amid the evil days; may our love burn and glow with ever-brightening flame; and when the evening of this age shall come, should we be spared to see it, may we be among those spoken of by the Apostle, when he says, "We that are alive shall not prevent them that are asleep, for we shall all be changed;" and, unlike the five foolish, we shall be like the five wise virgins, having our loins girt, our lamps burning, and ready to go out and meet the Lord.

LECTURE V.

EVENING CLOUDS.

Our Lord lays down in the following words one of the great characteristics of the approaching close of this economy. We are led to believe, from the words he employs, that before the end of this dispensation all forms of evil will assume an intenser shape, and all systems of error be more fully developed. There shall be seductions, temptations, signs and wonders, charms and fascinations so terrible, so overwhelming, that they would deceive and destroy, were it possible, even the very elect of God.

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”—MATTHEW XXIV. 24.

I do not venture at the present moment to say that there is any system yet, which in intensity and magnitude rises to the height to which this prophecy points; but certainly there are in the present day, looming up at every point of the horizon, strange and portentous forms of error; notions as new as they are strange; doctrines fitted to beguile, confirmed by signs and wonders, so successful, such as they are, that they have beguiled and are beguiling thousands and tens of thousands; and would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect. In the Eastern Church, there is nothing at present to startle. It seems to be dead, its air laden with superstition, its light quenched, its love cold. It is not even galvanized into anything like ecclesiastical activity, if we may except incidental bursts of fanaticism. The churches of Holland, one of the most

Protestant lands in former times, are sunk to a fearful extent in rationalistic apathy. Not a few of the young men of Germany accept the myths, or whims of Strauss, and of the still later speculative spirits who have there turned Christianity into caricature, and reasoned everything like fact—if such may be called reasoning at all—out of existence. What is called the Pantheistic system also spreads; it has been inaugurated by some master spirits, at the head of whom is Carlyle in our own country, and Emerson, one of the most gifted and eloquent men in America. This system is the reaction of absolute atheism: atheism was the denial of God, pantheism is the very opposite; it is the assertion that everything is God, and everything in nature is part and parcel of God. About this system there is a great charm; it commends itself to abstract and reflective minds; it is adopted by others as evidence of genius. Aspiring and vain young men are more or less tainted with this form of heresy. In England, there has sprung up what is called the Tractarian error, where certain clergymen have long tried to balance between the Church of Rome and the Protestant Church of England, and have found it impossible. They have left behind them, as a legacy most instructive to future generations, the lesson—that we cannot mix and mingle perfect antagonisms; and that the result of every attempt to assume a half-way position is of necessity either repentance and return, or progression ending in being precipitated into the Church of Rome. One laments to hear of duchesses, and countesses, and nobles, and members of parliament, and nearly two hundred clergymen, passing over in succession to the Church of Rome by the kind offices of the Tractarian system; for in every instance it has been the bridge across the chasm from Protestantism to Rome. There is the Mormon community of Utah adopted into the sisterhood of States; and now under the government of one of the most hardened profligates, one of the most wicked villains that ever reigned, or rather tyrannized over a people—the head and chief

priest of the Mormons. It is almost humiliating that Liverpool, Glasgow, London, and Dublin, should furnish thousands of emigrants to this nest of impurity, this scene of abominations, of tyranny and despotism; under a vulgar impostor, if he be not a lunatic. He is illiterate, coarse, sensual, overbearing; and yet at this moment he exercises a power unprecedented in similar circumstances, over a large population that believe in him. This system too spreads, not from its intrinsic claims, but by ministering to all the vile appetites, diseased and grovelling passions, of the human heart. It acquires power by pandering to crime. It builds a gigantic empire of imposture upon the ruins of morality and social virtue. It is an emanation from beneath. And then as if this cloud were not enough to darken the horizon, I have been shocked at hearing accounts of the spread of a system, known as spiritualism, that attempted a lodgment here, and was laughed out of society by every sensible man. It has settled and rooted itself in America, and counts its increasing thousands of followers. It traces its succession most legitimately to the witch of Endor; like her it professes to hold communion with spirits in heaven and in hell; and pretends, blasphemously pretends, to bring down from heaven by knocking on a table, the spirit of any one who has died, from the commencement of the Christian era down to the present moment. It is difficult to believe that such nonsense can flourish out of Bedlam; yet the other day I read in an American paper, that "this spiritualism is spreading over the country; already its adherents are great and respectable in number, above mediocrity in talent, and are found chiefly among the upper classes of America; among men influential in the Church, and in political life, and in literature; many others, like Festus, are half persuaded; and some come Nicodemus-like,"—that is a mistake; it ought to have been Saul-like; for it is for the same reasons that they come. These spiritualists have four or five newspapers of great influence and circulation; the proprietor of one pre-

viously a clergyman. They have twenty-five thousand adherents secret or open in Boston alone; more than ten thousand are avowed believers, or as the orthodox phrase is, professors in spiritualism; they have three places of worship in that city open every Sunday; they have service in different halls, which they have hired throughout the country; their literature is on the increase, some of their books have a large circulation; and a judge upon the bench has adopted it publicly; and some of the preachers of the spiritualist doctrines have congregations and meetings three times a day in connection with this horrid heresy. How unexpected, how startling that this system, so utterly baseless, so utterly inconsistent with the Word of God, should be taken up by reflecting minds! Does it not suggest to us at least the possibility, shall I say the probability, that these things may be the first sprinklings of the fulfilment of the awful prophecy in my text, that before the end arrive there shall arise false prophets? These false spirits "shall shew great signs and wonders." I need not allude to the signs and wonders that those men to whom I have just now referred show; some of them seem startling; but I cannot believe, even with those who have minutely investigated the matter, that there is anything supernatural in spiritualism. I do not believe that they can summon a spirit from heaven or hell; or that Satan would employ so bungling a system to carry out his own purposes and schemes. I have found no evidence of it. Satan is in it, in the sense in which he is in everything that is bad, in everything that would corrupt and contaminate the truth and arrest its progress among mankind, and in this delusion supremely; but in any other sense I cannot believe, notwithstanding all that has been said, that he is there; and still less can I believe that God would send a spirit from its happy home to gratify the itching curiosity of a fool who pretends to have communications with heaven, while he has never sought to have useful communications with his own corrupt and depraved heart. But while it may be nothing as a reality, it may be a

presignificant sign, a partial fulfilment of the prophets ; and as such alone I regard it. "There shall be false prophets."

Various predictions in the Word of God lead us to suppose that there will be great signs and wonders in behalf of error before the close of this present economy. For instance, in speaking of the great Antichrist, it is said that, "His presence will be with all power, and signs, and lying wonders;" the words "lying wonders" being literally translated not "false wonders," but "wonders that go to prove a falsehood," wonders that are allied to and enlisted on the side of what is falsehood. Then the evangelist John tells us in his Epistle, "Believe not every spirit, because many false prophets are gone into the world;" and he calls upon us to try the spirits, and he lays down the great law and test by which you may know, whatever be their signs, or wonders, or miracles, whether they are or are not from God. In 2 Peter, we are told that many false prophets shall come into the world. And in Rev. xiii. 8, it is predicted very plainly, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in sight of men." And again, we read in Rev. xvii. a similar prediction. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life:" "shall wonder," that is, wonder at what he does, at the great and stupendous feats that he accomplishes and performs upon the earth. And thus we have scattered intimations throughout the whole Word of God, that signs, wonders, or miracles, will be done, in our text expressly asserted to be so startling, so striking, that if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect.

Here is our safety, here is what you may fall back on if ever we should be tempted by apparent or real

signs and wonders. I need not state that the whole history of the Church of Rome sparkles with miracles; I mean miracles so called. You cannot read the biography of one of its departed saints without seeing that he moves through the world like an electric jar, radiating sparks of light and brilliancy upon the world always and everywhere; his miracles are so profuse that every act is a miracle, and they are miracles wrought on the most fantastic occasions, for the most absurd and fantastic ends, involving, however, their own condemnation by the very objects for which they are supposed or pretended to be wrought. This book is finished and complete; it is now literally and strictly true, "If we or an angel from heaven preach to you any other gospel than that ye have received, let him be anathema."

Every miracle wrought by our Lord, or by the apostles, was wrought to sustain a definite doctrine or a distinct and heavenly mission. On every occasion the miracle was not a freak of power done to startle, but omnipotent power put forth in order to hold up an inspired, a sublime, and a glorious truth. If one suppose that real miracles, as some divines think, have been done in the Church of Rome—and I do not see why we should deny that some supernatural deeds have occurred in it; for if Satan can penetrate the recesses of my heart, and whisper in its depths what is evil without consulting me, it is not supposing more than is reasonable that he may be able to do outward deeds that will startle the senses by their splendour, and indicate, if not a superhuman certainly an infra-natural inspiration and origin. It is not impossible that Satan, who is capable of penetrating man's heart, should be capable of doing deeds marvellous and startling in their brilliancy, and super- or infra-natural in character; and therefore I would not deny that some real supernatural things have been done in the Church of Rome. But suppose its greatest priest, its very pontiff himself, were to come into this capital, and perform what was an indubitable miracle, how should I deal with him and

that miracle? I would not turn him out; I would not burn him; I would not persecute him; I would not call him bad names; all of which treatment does no good, and has often done a great deal of harm. But I would bring him and his miracle, the wonder and the wonder worker, to the law and the testimony. Suppose he were to enter the nearest churchyard, and were to speak to the silent dust of some dead saint or Christian that rests beneath the green turf, and were to bid that dead one step forth from the grave after he had lain in it ten, twenty, thirty years; and in obedience to the pontiff's command the dead dust were to come forth, —I am not saying it is probable, I am only supposing it possible; and I am taking the very strongest manifestation of supernatural power in order to illustrate and to enable me to display the test by which we are to try it—I would instantly turn round to Pius IX., and say, “ You have done a miracle, confessedly a miracle; you have raised the dead; I cannot deny it. But as every miracle in the New Testament was wrought to prove a definite doctrine, and to attest the divinity of the mission that preached that definite doctrine; let me ask you, what doctrine do you mean to establish by this acknowledged feat of superhuman power?” His answer would probably be, that the Virgin Mary is immaculate, the last dogma that he defined, and the newest discovered doctrine; and secondly, that she ought to be worshipped as she is worshipped in St. Bonaventura's Psalter, where all the Psalms are sung to the Virgin Mary, together with the Litany and the Te Deum; and she is praised and worshipped, and magnified as the Queen of Heaven, and practically the great personage in the upper world. I would instantly ask, Is this doctrine in the Bible? If it be, I accept the miracle as from above, and I regard the doctrine as sealed to be divine. Being a new doctrine, and not being stated in the Bible, of course it would need miracles to attest it; but if it be directly contradicted in the Bible, repudiated clearly and plainly there, no splendour of miracle, no deed of power, no act above the human for one moment would make me

accept as from God what the Bible denounces as untrue. I read of Mary that she, Christian and beautiful character as she was, said, "My soul doth magnify," not myself, the Queen of Heaven, but "the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Who needs a Saviour? Not a saint, not an innocent, un-fallen being, but a sinner. More blessed are they that hear the Word of God and do it, than she who was the mother of the humanity of our blessed Lord. When I recollect that Scripture so clearly condemns all saint worship, that the mediation of Christ does not need, but utterly rejects, that Mary herself does not acknowledge herself to be what she is called by the Roman Catholic Church, then I call to mind the man of sin, whose coming is with all signs and lying wonders; then I remember that there shall be false prophets and false Christs, who shall show great signs and wonders, that if it were possible they should deceive the very elect; I should recollect, "If we or an angel from heaven preach to you any other gospel than that ye have received, let him be anathema;" and I would instantly turn round to Pius IX., after he had raised the dead, and say to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan; it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou worship." I at once feel that no splendour of miracle, no stupendous phenomenon, be it supernatural, be it above the level of the human, can ever convince me that a doctrine is true which this book in one single text reprobates and condemns.

We are told that there is one class that will be exempt from the seductive success of all this. They are called the elect. Who are the elect; can we discover them? What are the characteristics of this happy class exempt from all deception, as these characteristics are stated in the Word of God? In every instance in which the doctrine of election is spoken of in the Bible, it is stated, not as in catechisms, confessions of faith, and compendiums of theology, a dry, hard, difficult dogma; but always in connection with personal character, and practical godliness. Election, in the

Scotch Confession of Faith, is like a flower that has been, as you know, by a new process of maceration, stripped of all its vegetable matter, and the skeleton, exquisite in its tracery, very beautiful, but very dry, is all that remains. But election in this holy book is like a thing of life, and of power, and of beauty, embosomed in all that adorns, elevates, and sanctifies the conduct of man. "Chosen of God through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;" and "Chosen of God that we should be holy." Mark the distinction; not chosen because you would be holy, but chosen in order that you might be holy; chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that you might be holy. In the Word of God, election is always embosomed in practical duty. There is no ground, therefore, for asserting that the elect are safe, and borne into everlasting happiness by an irresistible force, do as they like, walk as they may; on the contrary, the route of the elect is through Christ, the road they traverse is paved with holiness; and on either side of that road there grow plants and flowers, full of and giving forth aromatic and delightful fragrance. God, in other words, has chosen the elect in order that they may be holy; and any definition of election, as with ultra-Calvinists—which holds out heaven without character, safety in spite of sin, and says you ought to look into God's secret book to find your name there, instead, as we tell you, of looking into your heart to find Christian character there—is a caricature and perversion of the doctrine of election altogether. The very nature of the doctrine makes it a holy force. If it be true that God chooses me before I choose him; that my love to him is but the response to his prior love to me; if it be true that he looked upon me in my ruins, and without any claim on my part lifted me by his grace to the hopes of glory, I must be humbled, I must be abased, I must lie in the very dust before him. And who does not know that if humility be not the mother of the Christian graces, certainly it is the soil in which graces grow and the flowers of Christian character

blossom most beautifully? As matter of history, Churches that have held the doctrine of election have been (it is a strong statement, but it is a true one) the most devoted, the most consistent, the most holy; and Churches that have denied it in name and in substance have been the least holy and vital, vigorous and consistent. Even in the Church of Rome, the Jansenists, who held the Augustinian doctrine, were men of high moral worth; whereas the Jesuits, who hold the ultra-Arminian doctrine, and deny the doctrine of election altogether, have been notorious for their diplomacy, equivocation, and practical ungodliness. Election is not fatalism: this is the doctrine of the Koran; this was the belief of the Stoics. On the contrary, it is election through means to a great, a glorious, and a blessed end. But some Christians have great difficulties in understanding how God can act impartially, or the creature be left with any freedom of will at all if election be true. Admit that God does all, and there can be no difficulty in admitting that he decreed long ago to do all that he does. If it be right in God to do a thing to-day, it was right in God to decree tens of thousands of years ago to do that thing. As to the objection, God's decree interferes with my freedom, I answer, it is untrue and impossible. The decree is an abstract thing in the great archives of the past; it does not begin to touch at all till it comes into action; and if the decree that God meant to make you a Christian, and to leave another as he is, not to alter him, has not yet come into operation, you have no right to conclude that it interferes with your freedom or responsibility at all. No decree to save Peter or to pass by Judas exercised the least restriction or coercion upon Judas. In every instance the sin springs from our own will, the election, which is sovereign grace, comes from God. But, you say, is there not at least partiality when God passes by some and selects others? Let me try to explain it. Suppose there be in a prison twelve murderers condemned to death, and justly so, and ordered to be put to death in the course of a few days. The king, or

sovereign of the country, opens the gates of every cell, tells them in the most unmistakeable terms that if they will bow down before him and acknowledge their rebellion, and their murders, and their crimes, and seek his royal pardon, every one of them shall be allowed to come out and mingle again with the nation at large. Suppose that the whole twelve spurn the offer, pour contempt upon his proffered royal kindness, upon his tenderness and his mercy—what is to be done? If the whole twelve are executed, there is only done to them what their crime has deserved. Suppose they are perfectly inaccessible to the appeals of mercy, to remonstrances, to entreaties, eloquent and reiterated, and the whole twelve resolve to die on the scaffold rather than own crime and seek pardon, you would say at once, if the whole twelve are put to death, no injustice is done. But suppose that sovereign has the power, which human sovereigns have not, to touch the hearts of six of these, and by an impulse from on high to bring those hearts to melt, and bow, and acknowledge their sin, and seek from him his royal forgiveness, and these six come out and do so, and the six others remain, where is the injustice, where is the partiality? They are all guilty, all deserve to die, and all would die did he not by an act sovereign and gracious touch the hearts of six and bring them to repentance, and restore them. But, you add, is not God partial? does he not respect persons? I answer, does he not do so always and everywhere? One man is born a noble, another is born a commoner: that is in God's providence. One man is born with a sickly and a tender frame, that feels every wind that blows, and suffers under every frost that bites; another man is born with robust health and strength, and is strong, equally strong, in winter and in summer. One man is so prospered in the world that everything he touches almost turns to gold; and another man—and it is a fact that everybody can attest—never succeeds in anything he attempts. One man is gifted with genius from his birth; another man has no genius at all. Now who makes these differences? Unquestionably, God. When

you object that in election God is a respecter of persons, you must urge the same objection, if you believe in the existence of a God, irrespective of revelation, for you find the very same respecting of persons, or, if I may use the expression without offence, arbitrary distinctions, in all the varieties of human nature, and in all the scenes of life. I look upon election, therefore, as the interposing of God to prevent the whole world going to destruction; and if God did not choose some in Christ from the foundation of the world, none would be saved.

There is a class of excellent and active Christians who hold, if I may use the expression, much milder views of the doctrine of election. Many of them do not like the word predestination; they do not like much the word election. But if you come to talk with them, you will find that whilst they disclaim the word, they rejoice in and accept the thing. Ask you that most excellent and venerable patriarch, whose name will not be forgotten in the annals of the Christian Church, Dr. Bunting, "Do you believe that God must touch my heart before I choose, or love, or rejoice in him? Do you believe that God must speak to me before I answer him? that God must draw me before I follow?" His answer would be, "For sixty years I have preached that doctrine, and nothing else." Then you and I need not quarrel; our difference is about words: you hold predestination only in substance, and I hold it in name and substance both: we are at one; and there need be no strife between us, for we are brethren. In short, a right view of God's sovereign grace—nay more, a right view of God's providential dealings—necessitates belief in election. What brought you first to the house of God where you heard and felt the Gospel? It did not originate from your own heart; it was some touch or impulse from on high, which led you to think first about real religion; it was something external to yourself. In providence we find election; in grace we find election; in fact, God is sovereign, and his sovereignty is election, and election is grace in its sovereign action upon individuals.

If you ask, Can you reconcile this election of God that we should be holy, or this touching the heart of one—which is the same thing—and not touching the heart of another, with the universal overtures of the Gospel of Christ? I answer, I believe both: I believe that no man comes unless God draw him; that is election: but I believe, at the same time, that there is nothing preventing every individual, the youngest and the oldest, who hears the Gospel, from instant pardon, instant acceptance, instant salvation through the blood of Christ, except what is in that individual's own heart. And when you stand at the judgment-seat of Christ, I remind you again, you will not dare to plead, and there is no record that a single individual has pleaded there, "I was not saved because I was not elect;" and if a lost soul finds itself in hell, this will be its awful and its ceaseless torment, "I am a suicide; I came here because I would; nothing drove me here but my own lusts, and passions, and sins, and wickedness." Now, if you ask me, however, to reconcile the universal overtures of the Gospel with this sovereignty, this election, this grace, I tell you candidly I cannot; and the longer that one lives, the more one learns how many things God has revealed which we believe because revealed, but cannot reconcile one with another. But when I find a fact in nature which I cannot reconcile with a previous classification of phenomena, I do not deny it as a fact, I lay it aside until I get light which will enable me to classify the phenomena properly. So, when I find a text in the Bible, or a doctrine which I cannot reconcile with another text or doctrine, I do not deny that the text is inspired, but I lay it aside in my memory till the time comes when I shall be able to harmonise it. For instance, we all know that there is a sea called the Mediterranean Sea. Into that sea the Nile, the Orontes, the Po, the Rhone, the Ebro constantly flow; the Atlantic itself rushes into it, the Black Sea pours into it through another mouth, or channel; three continents—Europe, Africa, and Asia—are all drained into it. Now, where do all the waters that pour in millions of

gallons into that sea go? This was the question that puzzled Europe for centuries. One said there was a subterranean channel, and that the waters went into the very bowels of the earth; another said that there was a contrary current below from what there was above that neutralised the constant flux of water into it; every one had his own theory of an outlet, but nobody thought of denying the fact that this sea received the waters of three continents, though nobody could explain how they escaped. The curious men gave all their own explanation; the cautious and the thoughtful men waited until light should dawn. And at last a chemist in the city of London discovered the solution—that the clouds receive the surplus: evaporation accounts for all. Some such discovery will harmonise those doctrines that we cannot reconcile. You may give a solution now; I may attempt an illustration here; but depend upon it, if these doctrines be here they are everlasting facts; and if they have the inspiration of God, there is harmony, though we see it not, and what we do not know now, let us wait, and we shall know hereafter.

Now, these elect, who are thus characterised by practical godliness, we are told, will never be deceived. Our safety from delusion in all its phases is vital, experimental, heartfelt religion. In other words, if we be Christians—oh, magnificent prospect!—neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. We may see all systems of error writhing in terrible and intermingling floods, but they shall not touch the soles of our feet; we may see all sorts of signs and wonders wrought to attest and to give splendour and gilding to the most deadly error. But hear, O believer! however lowly, however humble, hear the glorious promise of Him who is to come like the lightning in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory—"I give unto them eternal life; and none shall pluck them out of my hand."

LECTURE VI.

THE LAST WITNESS.

A very sure but to the world unnoticed token of the arrival of the world's Saturday evening is the fulfilment of the prophecy that—

“ This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations ; and then shall the end come.”—MATTHEW xxiv. 14.

TRANSLATING these words literally from the Greek, they read thus: “ And there shall be proclaimed as by a herald's voice or trumpet, this the Gospel of the kingdom in all the habitable globe for a witness ”—that may be accompanied, as the word indicates, with martyrdom—“ for a witness to all the nations ; ” or “ unto all the Gentiles,” as distinguished from the Jews, “ and then the end shall come.”

The Greek word for “ Gospel,” literally rendered “ good news,” is akin to our English, or rather Saxon word “ God-spell ; ” the word “ spell ” meaning “ news,” and “ God's-spell ” meaning “ God's news ; ” that is, the information that God has to tell us. Every time, therefore, we hear the Gospel, we hear news which God makes known to us. What are these news? If I were to state that there is an El Dorado discovered in Surrey, or a California in Kent, millions would rush from London across all its bridges in order to explore the mine, to collect the gold, and become suddenly rich. I have better news than these ; but, unhappily, news not always and everywhere popular. The very fact of our hearts not being thrilled by their announcement is evidence of something cold, dead, insensible to

what is the greatest glory, the richest happiness. The best and brightest things that ever vibrated on human ear, or thrilled human hearts, are these. Here is an epitome of the news: that there is for us orphans an everlasting home; for us exiles a country whose beauty and blessedness no tongue can tell, and no heart can conceive; for young men and women, weary in the shops, exhausted in the streets, sorrowful, depressed, dejected, a rest perfect, everlasting, and complete—the rest that remaineth for the people of God. To hundreds it comes as an old story. “Oh, how often,” will it be said, “have we heard that!—it has been told us Sunday after Sunday; we have read of it in our Bibles; we have been taught it in our schools, and we have committed it to memory from our catechisms.” This insensibility amid light is just the dreadful state of man’s heart that we have to deal with. Familiarity with the message takes away its edge, and blunts its impressions. If the lost could only hear that there is a home, and a heaven, and a rest accessible to them; if the poor savages in Africa, and in Labrador, and in Greenland, and in China, could but learn or hear for the first time, and accept the message while they hear it, that this life’s close is the commencement of a more glorious one, what a thrill of ecstasy would rush through every heart! Alas! the very exuberance of our blessings makes us insensible to them. This is one of the strangest phenomena, and yet one of the most common, that the more we are familiarized with mercies, the less we appreciate them. Were you a traveller in the distant desert, beneath a burning sky, and on a parched soil, weary, exhausted, scorched, and parched with consuming thirst, oh, with what thankfulness would you welcome one sweet, cold spring! you would value it infinitely more than all the wine that the richest and choicest cellars of the greatest and the noblest can furnish. But pure spring water is so common that we do not value it. Fresh air—perhaps in London somewhat corrupted—is so universal that we are insensible to its excellence. Our greatest blessings are scattered on the

high road, and because they are so we neither appreciate nor are thankful for them. The greatest mercies, the brightest hopes, the noblest truths, the most thrilling prospects, that ever tongue told or ear heard, are those heard every Sunday; but they are so familiar that they pass from the ear into the air again, as the wind passes through a ruined archway, creating a murmur in its transit, and leaving, instead of an impression, the silence of death. That this world is not the end of us; that this body, with its aches, and its pains, and its fevers, and its sicknesses, and its weaknesses, is not our lasting tabernacle, as it now is; that there remaineth a rest for the people of God, an everlasting home, an inheritance of glory, a crown of joy that fadeth not away—is surely glad tidings. Oh, blessed revelation! oh, bright hope! The ancient heathen hoped that there was an Elysium, but he could not prove it; the Mahometan fancies, on the authority of his Koran, that there is an everlasting harem, where his sensual passions will be gratified to the utmost; but as his conscience becomes pure and his mind enlightened, he grows sick of the sensuous prospect. But we have not to prove the existence of a heaven; it is not a corollary, nor an inference, nor a logical conclusion; it is a revelation from that God who dwells in it, and comes to us in all the certainty of an absolute and an indubitable truth. Has the thought of heaven ever cheered you? Has the prospect of a home ever made your fireside brighter, and your heart bound with joy? Have you sat in the country at eventide, and gazed upon the last rays of the retreating sun, and the emerging stars that begin to sparkle, and the quiet beauty of the moon as she mounts to her midnight throne? Have you ever thought, if not of the words, at least of the sentiments of the poet—

“ There is a heaven o’er yonder skies,
A heaven where pleasure never dies;
A heaven I hope and long to see,
Where Christ prepares a place for me.”

The amount of hold that a truth has on man’s con-

science, the joy it creates, the impulse it gives, is the measure of your belief and reception of it. Thus, the very first news, the good news, is a home beyond the stars, a rest for the weary, when time shall be lost in eternity ; a city that hath foundations ; a better country, whose sun never sets, whose sky is never covered with a cloud, where the flowers are amaranthine, where the trees never lose their foliage, where all is beauty and blessedness, and the heart has its deepest feelings and its highest longings gratified to the utmost. Is not this good news ? But some one says, " We know not the way ; how do we get to this heaven ? " Hear the good news : there is a way to this heaven. When man sinned, his sin, like a disruptive earthquake, rent this place we call the earth from that grand continent which we call home and heaven. In that tremendous chasm which disruptive sin dug between happy heaven and our poor, lost, stray, sinful earth, a broad, deep, moaning sea rises and beats against each strand continually. How can that chasm be crossed ? Ask the infidel, and he will tell you you must take a leap in the dark ; if you miss the opposite shore, you must perish. Ask the Romanist ; he will tell you the church is the bridge that will carry you across. Ask the New Testament, ask the Son of God ; and in his own majestic and emphatic accents, he replies, " I am the way ; no man cometh to the Father, but by me. " As God, he touches the shores of the great continent of heaven ; as man, he touches the opposite shore of the disrupted and broken-off island of time ; as God-man, he unites the twain into one ; reaching the very depths of my grave, touching the very heights of God's throne ; so that the most depressed, the most forsaken, and most guilty sinner, has but to enter upon that better than Jacob's ladder, which will carry him from the lowest depths to which sin has sunk him to the greatest heights to which God's love can possibly raise him. Is not this good news ? And this way is not a new one. It is in one sense the old way ; it is in another sense always new. By a new and " living way," says the Apostle ; that

word "new" is applied to all things that never lose their freshness. For instance, of some piece of music you can say, "It is always new;" and yet it was composed by Mozart or by Handel some forty, fifty, or a hundred years ago. You say of this way, it is a new way; and yet it is an old one. It is old, because it was preached in Paradise; it is new, because it has all the freshness, from the deep interest attached to it, of a first and early discovery. This way has been trodden by many of your fathers, and your children have trod it, and have entered into the everlasting rest. And if you examine it, in one part of the road you will find riches; in another part you will find rank; in another part of it beauty; in another, crowns, and coronets, and purple robes, and great learning, and vast genius, and lofty attainments; in another part, the tear of the weeper not yet dried, the blood of martyrs, as if it only had been shed the other day; all these having cast off the world like a loose garment, and dropped it on the road, that they might tread more unembarrassed the path that leads to God, to glory, and to happiness; in other words, counting all but loss for the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord." You have not a way to strike out; no mountains to cleave, no rocks to blast, no vast hills to tunnel through, no deep valleys to raise to a level, no broad oceans to cross. It joins the Pacific of time with the great Atlantic of eternity, without the difficulties of a Panama in the passage, to detain you for a single hour. What a blessed way! what good news! what glad tidings, that there is a heaven, a home, an everlasting rest, a joyful retreat. The way to it is so plain that carping scribes may miss it, critical divines may let it go, bitter sectarians may mistake it; but a wayfaring man, that is, an honest man, that wants to find out in the Bible the way to heaven, never can possibly err therein. It is a way, too, which has a chart ever directing you, the Spirit of God ever explaining it to you; and so crowded with those that beat it of all classes, ages, complexions, and colours, that no man goes alone to heaven. A great

multitude, out of every nation, kindred, people, and tongue, whose backs are on the world, and whose faces are Zionward and to God, goes with him. This good news, this Gospel, is not the discovery of a day: like a sweet stream, it broke forth from the Delectable Mountains in Paradise: it has often been hidden; it is now traceable not by its brawling waters, but by the belt of verdure which its streams create in their course. At times it is swollen to a majestic river, reflecting the sheen of great capitals, and the splendour of spires and towers that shine in retreating and in dawning suns. Oftentimes this stream has been infected by the currents of superstition and of the world; but only that it might eliminate its waters from the impurity of them all. Oftentimes it has been resisted; but the result of all attempts to resist its majestic current has only been to swell its flood, and to carry it on to the infinite and endless main with a more majestic and irresistible career. It is the Gospel that was preached in Paradise, that was believed by Abraham, that was gloried in by Isaiah, preached by Evangelists, written by Apostles, sealed by the blood of Christ, that was loved by Luther, gloried in by Calvin, enunciated with all its first freshness by Knox, and preached by Chalmers, and in thrilling eloquence proclaimed by Whitfield; the everlasting Gospel, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And this Gospel shall spread faster and farther every year. Wherever God's light shines its truth shall be heard; wherever God's heat is felt his love shall glow; wherever the winds of heaven whisper, there God's Spirit shall breathe; wherever the flowers blossom, there his grace shall grow; wherever there are sinners wandering through the world, there shall be white-robed saints finding an everlasting home; and whenever death has carried off his victim, there the angel of the resurrection shall sit waiting for the rosy dawn of approaching day, and giving testimony prophetic of its approach, when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and the living shall be changed; and the green vales of earth shall be covered

with imperishable verdure, and the mountain peaks shall burn with rosy sunbeams that never fade; and the islands of the earth shall blossom like Eden, and the continents of the world like heaven; and all height, and depth, and space, and time, shall bless God and be blessed in him. Such are the good news—a heaven; such are the good news—a road to it; such are the encouragements to the belief of its universality and its spread. “This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached.” It is not merely a Gospel, good news, but a Gospel of something very specific—of a kingdom. This kingdom is composed first of moral and next of personal elements. “The kingdom of God,” says the Apostle Paul, “is not meat nor drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy.” Did all ministers, bishops, priests, and deacons, recollect this, we should quarrel much less. God’s kingdom is not meat or drink, is not fasting or feasting; is not keeping Good Friday or not keeping it; is not observing Easter or ignoring it; is not a surplice or a silk gown; is not ceremonial or form; it is something higher, far more precious; it is “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Who are the personal subjects of this kingdom? Men of every rank, and every clime; some living under republic, some under despotism, some under limited monarchy; some called Churchmen, some Dissenters, and not a few called Roman Catholics; for we cannot think that every Roman Catholic will be lost. It would be an awful thought. There is a virtue, a vitality in God’s eternal truth that penetrates the eclipse of Babylon; and touches and transforms many a humble heart in it, not of it, looking for the kingdom and the glory of the Son of God. There are men of every rank, and class, and degree; of every sect, denomination, and party. Dare I exclude the poor, despised, persecuted, ill-treated, proscribed child of Israel and of Abraham? No, no. Often have I cherished the thought—and if I cannot prove it, I will indulge the thought in itself so sweet—that many a Jew has seen and clung to, and held fast Christ the Saviour, as

revealed in Isaiah liii.; while he did not receive him as proclaimed in the New Testament—the Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel. It is a delightful thought that the Gospel is not so cramped as we sometimes think. All those petty distinctions that men glory in and erect into shibboleths, depend upon it we may live to be ashamed of in this world; and at the judgment seat of God we shall wonder how we made lines of demarcation where there should have been none; and how we were far quicker to mount the judgment seat and hurl anathemas, than to bow at the throne of grace, and implore grace and lasting blessings.

Now this kingdom, thus composed, shall overflow all kingdoms. Heathendom is gradually dying out over all the world? Livingstone, the indefatigable traveller, and excellent missionary of that noble Society, the London Missionary Society, has penetrated the depths, explored the rivers, and opened new channels of access to hitherto untrodden and unknown lands of Central Africa. Our ships have touched the Pole, and made the North-West Passage. China is every day opening up, it may be amid tears, and bloodshed, and at terrible expense; and God is ruling and overruling, where he does not employ, all means actually contributing to this end. If we look round again upon other forms of error, we shall find that Mahometanism is almost gone; the crescent wanes over all the earth. There is actually a bank established in Constantinople; what is still more remarkable, colonists are courted from France and from England to take up their abodes and residence in Constantinople. The Gospel may be preached where it could not be preached before; and as if to crown the last proof of the waning crescent—terrible blow to every bigoted Moslem, the Sultan actually gave his arm to the lady of the representative of our sovereign in Constantinople; conducted her either to or from the ball, I forget which; a scene such as was never known in Constantinople or in Turkey for three hundred years. Its outbreak in India will prove its destruction. There

is abundant evidence of the waning crescent—the drying up of the waters of the great river Euphrates, that the way of God's ancient people may be prepared. As to Romanism, I have no more belief that it will gain the ascendancy in our country than that Mahometanism will. Its top branches are all withering in the air; its trunk is rotten to its very core; its roots have lost all their vitality; and some morning we may waken and hear like glad music reverberating from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, is fallen." And shall we be sorry for it? Shall we grieve over it? If we dared to do so unmanly a thing, our sympathies would rush back to the dungeons of Naples, or to the oppressed of Austria, or revisit Smithfield, and the glens and grey moors of Scotland; and witnessing the bloodshed and the martyrdoms perpetrated by it in Christ's injured and desecrated name, they would come back to us armed with indignation, and instead of bidding us deplore the ruin, they would urge us to join with the anthem-peal that rings from heaven to earth: "Rejoice over her, ye angels and ye holy saints; for the oppressor of the brethren is gone; and there shall be in it the light of a candle, and the voice of the bridegroom and of the harper no more at all." And then "the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and endureth through all generations."

This Gospel—these glad tidings of a kingdom—we are told shall be preached to all the world as a witness. It shall be preached to all nations as a witness; not to convert all nations. Some of our Christian brethren believe that the Millennium is to be the product of present missionary agency; and that the preaching of the Gospel will end in the conversion of all nations. I do not see this. The gospel is sent to bring a people out of the world to God, and to be a witness to all, not the conversion of all. This prediction is all but ful-

filled. The Bible has been translated into every spoken tongue, and the word of God is preached at this moment in earth's countless dialects. I appeal to the Bible Society, where you have a specimen of the Bible in every language spoken under heaven. This glorious Gospel has penetrated the long unvisited Crimea, and awakened accents that will never die on the margin of the Euxine and the Caspian Sea ; it has been preached in the Kremlin, and proclaimed upon the steppes of Tartary ; it has been heard on the banks of the Don and the Dnieper, by the barbarous and savage inhabitants that are there ; on the Caucasus and amid the Ural mountains ; over all the North and the North-Eastern nations of Europe. It has penetrated Peking, it has been heard in Canton ; and the roll of cannon and the reverberations of the war-drum, however much we may deplore them, will prove the pioneers of its march and its progress. This Gospel is not unknown in Persia ; it has been heard amid the mountains of Afghanistan. The Thames, the Tiber, the Don, the Mississippi, the Euphrates, the Ganges, and the Nile, have reflected its glad sunshine, and re-echoed its grand truths. And perhaps we stand upon the very margin of an age that will witness all these floods and all their populations assembled together, and shouting with a voice that will swell to heaven and never cease on earth, "Hallelujah! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

LECTURE VII.

PHENOMENA IN HEAVEN AND EARTH.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”—MATT. xxiv. 29—31.

IN order that we may be in possession of all the varieties of expression descriptive of this great eclipse, let us turn to other Evangelists; Mark describing it in these words, Mark xiii. 24: “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.” In Luke xxi. 24, we find these words: “They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in

the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

Now, whether we are to accept in all their literality the very startling and awful phenomena here predicted, it is extremely difficult to decide. In all probability, judging from predictions already fulfilled, the fulfilment of these will be partly material and literal, partly moral and figurative. Almost all such predictions have a moral and material accomplishment—the latter the shadow of the former—impressing on the senses of mankind the arrival of the predicted judgment. The best way to ascertain the exact meaning of these words will be to compare and collate passages where similar figures are already employed. That these expressions are employed, at least occasionally, in a strictly figurative sense is perfectly clear. For instance, Solomon says, in the book of Ecclesiastes, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain." Here expressions almost synonymous with those in our Lord's prophecy are employed to denote great distress, feebleness of body, darkness and affliction of mind. We shall also find that the same phrases are employed by the prophets in the Old Testament economy to describe moral, and not merely material phenomena. Isaiah, in his prophecy, uses this very phraseology: "In that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea; and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof." In Isaiah xiii. 10, we read, "For the stars of heaven and

the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." In Ezekiel xxxii. 7, we find similar phraseology used to denote national or wide-spread disaster, where he says, "And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God." Now in all these passages, and there are many others that I might quote, unquestionably the impressive figures of the text are employed as the back-ground from which to reflect, with sharper outlines, moral and spiritual retributions. It may therefore be possible that all this expressive and graphic imagery is employed to describe the terrible perplexity, the deep distress, that shall possess the hearts of all nations, when the commercial crisis of America shall be that of all the earth, and the consternation of thousands in 1857 shall be that of millions paralyzed with terror and presentiments of evil. But at the same time it is impossible to deny that they have also a material, and not merely a figurative meaning. Haggai, speaking of the close of this dispensation, says, "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come:" a prophecy that we are told by the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, is yet future: "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised," writes the Apostle Paul, sixty-four years after the birth of Christ, "now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken;" that is, material phenomena; "as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." It would seem, therefore, that we are justified in taking both explanations, that there shall be signs in the sun, obscuration in the stars of

heaven, celestial phenomena so startling and unprecedented—so wide-spread and portentous—that the most sober and reflective will feel that we stand on the margin of some great crisis, while Christ's believing and expectant people will recognise in all the warning sign, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; the time of your redemption draweth nigh." At the same time, we shall find that nothing can occur in the shape of material phenomena, however unprecedented or extraordinary, which men will not explain away. I have no doubt that many of the cotemporaries of Noah, while they saw him building the ark, derided his folly, and described Noah and his project in the Charivaris and caricatures of the day as an antediluvian lunatic, while they contemptuously smiled at the stupid old man who dreamed that any force we are acquainted with could raise the ocean from its oozy bed, and cause it to overflow hill and valley, and leave not a living thing over the face of the whole earth. Up to that very morning when the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the windows of heaven poured down water, the philosophers and the astronomers-royal of the age demonstrated with mathematical accuracy that a universal flood was a physical impossibility, and that Noah was, beyond all dispute, a fool and a fanatic, whose requests to the people to enter into the ark ought to be treated with the contempt such counsels deserved. When phenomena shall overtake this world that shall be the divinely-appointed pioneers of the great and final convulsion, demonstrations in leading articles, and letters, and essays, will appear thick as dead leaves in November, showing that all is explicable from electricity, or the polarization of light, or other natural law, and that it is very wrong in Christian ministers to disturb weak nerves, and alarm timid minds; pleading, also, as they did of old, "All things continue as they were from the beginning until now:" not knowing that thousands of signs are pre-signifying the exhaustion of an age in which we play so momentous a part, and the approach of a glorious dispensation, in which I trust

and pray that we shall be found heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

Immediately after all these things, on which I do not now dwell, there is one prediction that has occasioned not great dispute, but certainly great variety of opinion. It is this: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man;" some sign that is to usher in the advent of the Son of man. What is it? All I can do is to let you hear the opinions I have gathered, from the earliest writer, Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople, down to the most recent interpreter of prophecy. Some say that the sign of the Son of man means simply the advent of the Son of man. But the sign is distinct from the thing signified; and if it be a sign, it surely cannot be what the sign signifies—the advent of the Son of man. Another class of interpreters believe that this sign is to be the appearance of the glorious and radiant resurrection body of our blessed Lord; and the ground on which they say so is, that "To this faithless generation shall be given no other sign than the sign of Jonah the prophet." What was that sign? Christ's resurrection. And as the sign of Jonah was appealed to by him, so the sign set forth and spoken of by the Son of man will be, these interpreters think, the appearance of the glorious and glorified body of the Son of God. But then this, again, seems to me to confound the sign and the substance, or the thing signified, and therefore not a true and natural exposition of it. The third class of opinions was the most common during the earliest ages of the Christian Church. Almost all the Greek Fathers of the fourth century, and one or two of the Latin Fathers,—and their agreement here is singular, whether it be true or superstitious—Chrysostom and his cotemporaries, almost to a man, think that the sign of the Son of man is to be a gigantic luminous cross that will appear in the firmament, covering a space wide as the widest horizon; so brilliant, so overwhelming in its splendour, that no scientific solution, no optical delusion, no resource of astronomy, will be able to explain it or exhaust its

meaning. I do not believe that this is the correct explanation. I merely state it as an almost universal belief in the fourth century of the Christian era. I think it arose in some degree from that incipient superstitious veneration of the cross which has culminated into the rankest idolatry in the Roman Catholic Church. For, after all, the cross, as a material thing, is nothing : it was a Roman instrument of punishment, and that instrument was used because it was the legal and the prescribed one at the time. It is the moral glory of the atonement that is the cross of Christ. That in which Paul gloried was not the wood on which Jesus hung, but the sacrifice which Jesus made and perfected there. Others think that the sign will be the approach of an illuminated cloud, something like the chariot of fire on which the prophet of old ascended into heaven, careering through the sky, and borne on the willing winds, interpenetrated with beams of intense splendour, the sign of the approach of the chariot-wheels of Him who comes to reign, and whose right it is. Other interpreters think it will be the very star that stood over the manger, which, with greater splendour and brilliancy, and subject to a more universal notice, shall stand over that spot on which the feet of the Son of man shall stand, and where Jew and Gentile shall gather together to praise, to adore, and to worship him. A star of almost supernatural brilliancy hung over the Mount of Olives during the summer of 1857. Jew and Gentile were powerfully impressed by its appearance ; the former thinking it the sign of the Messiah, and the latter the "sign of the Son of man." Others think that this sign of the Son of man will be the *shechinah* ; that which burned between the cherubim in the holy place ; that moved like a pillar of bright flame in the desert before the hosts of Israel : and when this glory shall burst upon the world, the light of the sun, and the shining of the moon and the stars will all grow pale in the intensity of that splendour of unearthly brilliancy and glory. It seems to me very doubtful how far these have any foundation in truth. The most

probable (for I can only speak of probabilities) interpretation is, that "the sign of the Son of man" will be the accomplishment of all that has preceded. After the Gospel has been preached as a witness to all nations; after there shall come false prophets, deceptive and delusive in their doctrines, captivating, because teaching a lax morality, putting up pretensions to miraculous powers so plausible that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect; after the lightning begins to burst from the east in increasing splendour to its lair in the distant west; after all these have come to pass, we shall have the sign, or the assurance, that the coming or approach of the Son of man draweth nigh.

When he comes it will be with power and great glory; and "then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory." Just before he ascended into heaven, he said, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth;" and so when he comes again he will come armed with that power as a fact which he announced at his ascension as a prerogative and a gift. This power will be felt in the graves of the dead; it will be seen in the gathering and separation of the startled and the agitated living; it will be visible in the paling sun, in the waning moon, in the hiding stars; it shall then not be disputed, but felt as an incontestable fact, that all power in heaven and in earth is his. And he will be accompanied, it is said, with angels. These will constitute his retinue, and form a portion of that great glory with which the Son of man shall come. We have this described in the prophet Daniel five hundred years before these words were pronounced: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not

pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." And very beautifully and very exactly it is said in the Acts of the Apostles, "Ye men of Galilee, this same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven," that is, in a cloud, "shall so come as ye have seen him go." And in the opening chapter of the Book of Revelation it is said, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." More glorious than on the mount of transfiguration, with more angels than he appeared on Sinai, he cometh to judge the earth. We have in the next place the accompaniments of his advent. First of all, we are told in 1 Thess. iv. that "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout;" all going on as it was, the market full of activity, the exchange crowded with intensely interested and anxious men, the sail and the steamer on the ocean, the train rushing along its iron road, the tradesman behind his counter, the merchant in his counting-house, the judge upon the bench, the senator pleading about taxes, about progress, and about reform; at once and without a warning, shall be heard a sound louder than all the parks of all the artillery of earth, or the severe thunders of heaven, whose reverberations shall reach to the highest heaven, and descend to the deepest hell, and cover with their crashing echoes the widest space of God's startled earth and agitated world. When that shout shall be heard, men's blood will grow cold almost at their heart, the pulse of nature for the first time will stand still, and the most sceptical will believe that whatever be the nature or the issues of the scene, a new and startling era has arrived in the arrangements and the providential purposes of God.

On turning to the book of Revelation, we read there that the angels that accompany our blessed Lord when he comes again in power and great glory, will have each angel his own specific and important mission. One angel, we are told, will cry, lifting up his hand to heaven, and swearing by Him that liveth for ever and

ever, that time shall be no longer; all the means of grace have ceased, all opportunities of salvation are gone, grace now must merge into judgment. Another angel will take up a great stone, large as a mill stone, and cast it into the depths of the sea; and thus, with great violence, shall that city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. Another angel will cry with a loud voice, "Thrust in thy sickle and reap the harvest of the earth;" and another will say, "Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and reap the clusters of the vine of the earth. And he gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God." At the close of all this, another angel shall be heard, whose voice shall sound louder than the loudest trump, ringing from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment." We can scarcely realize for one moment that solemn, but to a Christian joyous and hopeful scene; when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall hear. Look at that churchyard; suddenly the green sods begin to heave as if quickened with some strange vitality. Hark again, in that ancient abbey! marble mausolea rend and split, and monuments of bronze seem to crumble before that mysterious breath, almost like spiders' webs. Look again; and the great ocean that has slept so calmly begins to heave and writhe and be convulsed, sending up that deep and moaning cry as of a wounded creature in great pain. Some subterranean earthquake heaves its foundations from their deepest depths. And out of the sea, and out of the green churchyard, and out of the ancient pyramids of Egypt, and out of monuments of bronze, and out of mausolea of marble, myriads of living beings come forth, fresh like Adam from the hands of God, fair as the angels of the sky; and friend recognizes friend, and brother bids welcome to brother; and all congregated together are presented by Christ to himself, a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing. But this is not all; not only shall that trumpet voice raise the long sleeping

and silent dead, but all Christ's people that are living shall instantly be changed. There are some people—no, I do not say there are, but there will be some people—that will never die. We often read the text, "It is appointed unto all men to die;" but it is we that put in the "all;" it is not the Spirit of God. Open your Bibles and turn to the text, and you will find, "It is appointed unto men to die;" it is not appointed unto all men, for a day comes when the whole earth being covered with living men, one half of them shall be changed, lifted up in the cloud, and ushered into heaven; and the other half shall be overwhelmed in the last and crushing catastrophe of a world in flames. When the dead shall be raised, Christ's people that are living shall not die but be changed. And what a strange and mysterious separation will then take place! Our blessed Lord himself tells us in very solemn and very striking language, "Two women shall be grinding at the mill," one a Christian, the other not, "one shall be taken," changed, lifted into the glorious cloud, "the other shall be left," to perish in the wreck and ruin of all things. And again, he says, "Two shall be in the field," sowing, or reaping, or ploughing, the world going on as it was, "one shall be taken," changed, translated, "the other shall be left," and share in the great catastrophe. In which class shall we be? Among those who will hail the drooping sun, the hiding stars, and the obscured moon; and hear only music in the roll of the last trump, and right joyous words in that great shout that rends heaven and earth; for to us, if we be children of God, will come a voice the sweetest and the most musical that can descend from heaven into waiting and willing hearts, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

"Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man." The word "earth" is translated often in the New Testament "the land;" and in many instances unquestionably refers to the land of Judea. The epithet "tribes" is not applied to

the Gentiles; it is the distinctive appellation of the Jews. This is the prediction of the fact that the Jews, gathered to their own land, and there attempting to build their temple, and to offer up their sacrifices, shall be converted instantly and in a day by the pouring out of the Spirit of God; and then they shall see Christ, and mourn. Zechariah, speaking of them at this era, and describing great phenomena that are to take place on a day, called "the great day of God," says, "In that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every house with astonishment." Then in the sixth verse, "In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood." And in the eighth verse, "In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God." And he says in the ninth verse, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon, in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn." These words "every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart," are most significant. Surely they show that the Jews will be replaced in Jerusalem, divided into tribes

in their own land, when their repentance occurs, for each tribe is to mourn apart. I believe that splendid prophecy in the last eight chapters of Ezekiel, with its temple, the allocation of the tribes, their distribution throughout the land, will be strictly realized. A person suggested to me that the whole picture of the temple of Ezekiel in the last eight chapters could be erected only in one spot in the land of Palestine; and that the proportions were so perfect, and their geographical relationships so exact, that a skilful architect might easily draw out a ground plan, and the structure of the edifice itself; and show that it was not a figure to be fulfilled in the bulk, but a literal erection to beautify the coasts and the fields of Palestine. I got a rough sketch prepared by an eminent architect in my congregation. In my schoolroom I asked some one to read the verses of the last eight chapters of Ezekiel in succession, while I pointed with a rod to the picture. Nothing could be more exact than the coincidence between the inspired words and the drawing. This great temple will be raised in Jerusalem, and into it the glory will come in another way than it came into Solomon's temple, when God will pour out his Spirit upon all the tribes settled in various districts of the land; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall discover that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, and they shall mourn, and be in bitterness of heart. Palestine shall have the precedence of all lands, and Jerusalem be in a far higher sense the beautiful metropolis of all the earth.

"He shall gather his elect from the four winds of heaven." In other words, the moment this sign of the Son of man comes—and perhaps the most suggestive and eloquent sign of all will be the return of the Jews to their own land—he will gather his elect people from every end of the earth. Africa, Asia, Europe, and America will pour forth from every point of the world's wide circumference their responsible myriads; all rushing to that great central spot, all with beating hearts, some with broken, others with bounding hearts, to

answer for the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil. The Jew shall start from his synagogue, the Arab shall come from his tent, the Moslem emerge from his mosque, the Cossack from his steppes, the wild Indian from his wigwam, the bishop from his cathedral, and the presbyter from his church; all shall hear his voice, and under an attraction that some would not resist if they could, and that others deprecate and would resist if they could, shall appear at the judgment seat of Christ, there to receive the unalterable sentence of endless, and to some glorious retribution. Such, then, will be the phenomena of that day.

Are we in the number of the elect? Are we washed in that Saviour's precious blood? Are we regenerated by his Holy Spirit? Are we born again? It matters little comparatively what church you prefer, what chapel you worship in, what rites you love, or what sermons you dislike; if you bear the royal signature of Christ, if you are made new creatures. Two eternities are struggling to have you, but one only will embosom you, that eternal joy which is in reversion for all them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose. Happy are the people who are in such a case! On your graves, the bleakest of them all, the heart's-ease may blossom; and on their lintels and on their door-posts the morning of the resurrection already begins to break. It matters little when you die, it matters nothing where you die, or where your dead dust may be laid; this only is the great thing, that you are found in Christ, washed in his precious blood. Come judgment, come tribulation, come the rending earth and the shattered sky; come darkened sun, and clouded stars, and hidden moon; "I," says the Saviour, "give unto such eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of my hand."

LECTURE VIII.

THE LATTER RAIN.

“ And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh ;” &c.—JOEL ii. 28—32.

WAS this prophecy exhausted when the Holy Spirit, at the day of Pentecost, was poured out upon the Apostles? I believe not. No phenomena occurred at Pentecost adequate to fulfil the whole prediction. In the 24th chapter of Matthew we find that the phenomena predicted by Joel are also predicted by our Lord to occur when he shall come again, to put the sheep upon his right hand, and the goats upon his left, and apportion each an eternal destiny. It therefore seems that Pentecost was the first sprinkling of a great shower that is destined yet to saturate and refresh all portions of the world's long, bleak, and very thirsty wilderness, the early rain to be followed by the latter. During the Christian economy, that is, during the last days, from Christ's birth to Christ's second advent, Joel's prophecy has been fulfilling. The first shower, the April shower as it were, or the early rain, began at Pentecost; there were incidental showers in every succeeding century; but the great and copious baptism that is to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord, or, in the beautiful language of the Apocalypse, to make the bride ready for the Bridegroom, remains still to come, and to be the token of that great day when all things shall be made new, and the world shall be restored and regenerated. If this were my peculiar or singular opinion, I should scarcely venture to assert it with such confidence; but Calvin, that acute and able scholar, averse

to all that seemed extravagant, says: "Joel views the whole kingdom of Christ, its beginning and its end; and what he predicts is to occur between the first day of Pentecost and the last day of the resurrection of the saints." Howe, the great and eloquent Puritan, whose works are so rich in precious theology, says in his work on the Holy Spirit: "It is plain Peter did not intend that this at Pentecost was the completion of the prophecy." These two divines, and many others I could quote in more recent times, concur in looking at the Pentecostal effusion, eighteen hundred years ago, as only the first and copious shower of what is to occur in the end of the age.

In order to ascertain clearly and plainly what would be the effects of this pouring out of God's Holy Spirit, I think the rational way is to ascertain, first of all, what this Holy Spirit is predicted or asserted to do in individual cases. The Holy Spirit is a person, a divine person. We believe that the Father is God, that the Son is God, that the Holy Spirit is God. If we are asked to explain this, I answer, I cannot; if it be asked do we comprehend it, I answer, No. But there are many more things incomprehensible in our experience than our philosophy will sometimes bow itself to admit. Ten thousand things are about us, and in us, and over us, that we accept as facts, though we cannot comprehend them as mysteries. Now, then, this Holy Spirit being a person, and a divine person, is promised by the Saviour as his substitute, and so far representative, throughout the whole of the Christian economy. Therefore, when we hear of any priest calling himself the vicar of Christ, we feel the thing is monstrous. The Holy Spirit only takes the place of Christ. "I will send you," he says, "another Comforter, that he may abide in you for ever." That Holy Spirit is to abide in the hearts of believers till Christ come, making them meet to welcome to our world their King, their Saviour, and their God. The Holy Spirit's work is delineated in the Gospel of St. John. By ascertaining what this Holy Spirit is to do in each individual, we shall thereby be

able to infer what he will do in the wide world at large. Our Lord says in John xiv., "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name; he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Then in the xvth chapter, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." In the xvth chapter, "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear he will speak; and he will show you things to come." These are the three passages that most expressly and vividly state what the Holy Spirit is to do. He is called the Comforter; but before he assumes that name he is called the "Spirit of truth;" "the Spirit of truth, the Comforter." All true Christian comfort must be based upon truth. There is no comfort in a lie; there may be an opiate, or there may be stupefaction in it; but the truth, the Spirit of truth alone, is the Comforter. As long as he comforts he will tell you the truth; and he will tell you the truth in order to comfort you.

This Spirit of truth is predicted in the first place to guide unto all truth. There is an instinct in our nature that prompts us to ascertain what is truth. What is all literature? Man searching out for truth. What are all the investigations of science? Man wanting to get at the heart and truth of things. We should seek to know religious truth just as we seek to know scientific truth, only that many keep in their hearts lodgers that they will not cast out, and cherish in their practice habits they will not abjure; and therefore do not want, because they do not like the truth to reveal what they are conscious will not bear the light of truth. No man likes to undergo a painful operation; but when he is convinced that the operation is necessary to a cure, he will submit to it. No man likes the truth to come into contact with something which he knows should not be there; but if you are persuaded that to know the

worst of the matter is the only way to get at peace and happiness, then you will submit to it. He will teach you all the truth: the truth about God, the truth about yourself; the whole truth about what you were, are, and will be. We do not mean to say that he will flash splendour from the skies, and so fill your souls with supernatural sunshine, or that he will place a tongue of flame upon every head; but that he will make so plain to you God's word by removing from your mind the dark prejudices that prevent you seeing it clearly, that in his light you shall be able to see all light.

This being the effect of the Holy Spirit's possession of an individual heart, we have only to transfer the personal and the local to the universal, to see what will be the effect of this Spirit poured out upon all flesh. The moment this takes place, all words will be truth, all thoughts will be just, all ways will be straight. Instead of those flickering rays of sunshine that we, in our ignorance, dignify with the name of summer, there shall burst upon the world Eden's own bright, cloudless, lasting noon, and all the earth shall be filled with the glory of God, as the waters cover the channels of the great deep. The crescent that now wanes in the eastern sky shall then give place to the great glory of redemption, Christ, and him crucified. The vast continent of China shall be no longer oppressed by the debasing superstition of Confucius, or stained and marred by crimes that dare not be mentioned; but bask in the sunshine of eternal day. India shall no longer be the victim of Brahmin and Buddhist, and lie beneath a upas tree that spreads death wherever its shadow falls. The years 1857 and 1858 will be recollected one day by millions of that population as the most unhappy and deplorable chapters in their history; and whilst they lament in tears their part, they will bless God that he has taught them to see their crimes and renounce them, and to rejoice in the blessings and glories of an Indian Pentecost. Austria and Italy, those magnificent lands, will come forth from the grave of a thousand years, the mists cleared away from their eyes, and they shall

no longer sit amid the swamps of the Papal superstition, but beneath the shadow of the Rock of Ages and the Tree of Life. Russia, so degraded and sunk by a superstition little better than that of Italy, shall open its eyes and hail a brighter faith and a new day. All mysteries to us shall be made plain; the light of the Spirit shall then be in every understanding; the Sun of Righteousness shall then rise with healing under his wings; and all shall bask in his light; they shall no more teach every man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord;" for all shall know him, from the least to the greatest. Such, then, would be the effect of the fulfilling of what God has predicted.

This Holy Spirit, in individual cases, is also represented as the Comforter. This is a very blessed thought—that our religion is not, as some people think it, a creed in one hand and a thunderbolt in the other; or, as some imagine, merely prophesying evil and troubling the camp of Israel; it is a religion of joy; a spring of the highest and most enduring happiness; and if you be not happy, depend upon it it is not your Christianity that makes you unhappy, but the want of it; for as sure as you have the Spirit to teach you all truth, so sure you will find the Holy Spirit to be your comforter. Yours will be happiness and joy, in such measure as may be most expedient for you. How delightful is the fact that we have a Comforter! There are times when we cannot help being depressed; depression however arising not always from spiritual and religious springs, but from those troublesome concerns that we call nerves. Hence many a person searching out a comforting word, would do well to go to a physician and ask him for a prescription. You must not always attribute to religion what is attributable to other and subordinate causes. But when you need consolation, arising from your misapprehension of Divine Truth, how consoling to have One who can comfort us, and that we are capable of comfort! The lost in misery are incapable of it; but we are capable of it. We have in the Spirit one who can comfort a people accessible to

his influence. There are in this world many of Job's miserable comforters. You have lost a near and a dear one, perhaps you are sorrowing over some one who has found a soldier's grave amid the burning sands of India. Some person comes to you with a great deal of ostentatious piety, and a very long face, and a voice transposed to the minor key ; and tells you, you should not sorrow, you should not weep, you should not feel grieved ; it is very sinful of you ; it is very wrong of you. How harsh and cold is such advice ! Why, Jesus wept ; the Son of God felt sorrow. To rebuke me for having human nature is to rebuke God for having made me. It is as natural to weep as it is to smile ; it is as natural to feel sorrow as it is to taste joy. To go to a sufferer sorrowing in the shadow of a bitter calamity, and to say, "Do not weep ; do not be sorrowful ; it is sinful to be so," is to aggravate the sorrow, which you had much better let alone. Another of Job's comforters comes with some dry, worthless common-place, and says, "It is all very natural ; you cannot help it ;" and they give this miserable consolation just as a nurse in a sick-room often presents a cup of medicine, she heartily detests, to the poor patient that needs it. But this Comforter presents the right consolation at the right moment ; he knows what spring to touch, what note to sound, what word to speak, what leaf from the tree of life to apply to the bleeding heart ; and then, "Comfort, comfort ye my people," becomes no more a prophet's vision, but a Christian's deepest and innermost experience. It may be asked, perhaps, how does he comfort ? Not by bringing a new revelation ; nor by adding one chapter to the Bible. There is a great error, into which some Christians fall, when they speak of the Spirit's work. They think he takes off some film from the sacred page, or adds some words to the sacred testimony. It is not so. The Holy Spirit takes of the things that are Christ's and shows them unto us ; he brings all things to our remembrance whatsoever Christ has said unto us. In other words, when the Holy Spirit comforts you, he does not brighten the truth ; but he

sweeps away the cobwebs from your minds—the mists, and films, and prejudices from your vision—the distorting and diverging passions from your heart; and thus he enables you to see and draw comfort from that truth which he presents to you. Who has not felt infinite comfort in sorrow when some long-hidden truth flashed suddenly upon his memory? Who has not felt as if an angel touched him when some unknown but seasonable and consolatory truth came suddenly within the horizon of his mind? Who has not felt as if he had been transported back to Paradise when some flower of Eden, long shrivelled and withered within him, suddenly burst into all its Eden bloom, and shed the very fragrance of heaven over the sorrows and the sufferings of a heavy human heart. Thus the Spirit comforts, not by showing something altogether transcendental and unknown, but by bringing the truth he has inspired into contact with the heart that needs it. This is his peculiar and sovereign power. A preacher can speak to his audience—their ears drink in his words, and their intellects understand them; but many a truth distinctly heard, and many a proposition clearly understood, fails to reach the heart or the conscience; it stops short in the head, or lies cold in the memory. The Holy Spirit of God can preach to the inmost heart, better than man preaches to the outward ear; and make the heart feel just as easily as the preacher can make the people hear. Thus he can comfort in a way and with a success that man cannot attain.

It is the office of the Holy Spirit also to give life. This gift is eminently the prerogative of Deity. The world can give a new dress, the sovereign can give a new title, the humblest minister can give a new baptism; but the Holy Spirit of God alone can give life to the heart. By life is not meant excitement; excitement is cheap enough; it can be had at a small price anywhere, and on any occasion. Religious excitement may be fever, which is not health, but the very reverse of health. Nor is it outward conformity to outward things; that is not life. The Holy Spirit

can quicken the dead soul, stir the stagnant tides in the veins and arteries of the heart, and raise by a mysterious touch the whole temperature of the spirit and heart within. There may be no eloquence; there may be no outward, visible, startling phenomena; yet there may be a secret penetrating life flowing through many hearts, and originating in each, not the fever of fanaticism, but the life of true religion. Life is not necessarily a violent thing. The man who is extravagant in all his ways, and acts, and deeds, and movements, we set down as a lunatic: true life makes the footstep firm, the heart beat steadily, all the organization and action of nature healthy; it makes no noise, shows no sign of extravagance; and yet is the mightiest motive force that God vouchsafes to his intelligent creatures. Were each individual throughout our world inspired by this life, what would be the result? Valleys of dry bones would become countless hosts of living men—dead and withered branches would be weighed down with fruit fragrant, beautiful, and ripe. Outward acts would have an elevation, and a purity, and a sublimity that they never had before. Prayer would cease to be a mere form; praise would no more be a mere song; public worship would cease to be a mere propriety; and while the church would neither be a theatre nor a convent, it would be recognized as that floor on which would be transacted interests that stretch into everlasting ages, and stir the spirits that are in heaven with deep and kindling sympathy with what is experienced in this world.

A distinctive characteristic of this Holy Spirit is holiness; that grace whose standard is the law, whose subject is a Christian, whose authorship is the Spirit of God. Not outward beauty, not ecclesiastical decoration, not gorgeous robes, not resplendent ceremonies; but the simplicity of worship, the purity of truth, the moral grandeur that God the Spirit inspires within and develops without. The drunkard would become sober; the miser would become liberal; evil would flee like a shadow; Satan would be cast out; and Paradise

would end the world as Paradise began it; and if trade should be continued, it would be like a liturgy; and if the counting-house should exist, it would be as a sanctuary; and if parliaments were in action, statesmen would not follow the dictates of expediency but of duty. The priest would give up his breviary; the hypocrite would resign his mask; and whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God.

If this Spirit were poured out upon the individual, there would be power; for what is he called? He is called "the power of the Holy Ghost?" Why does many a sermon fail to have effect? It may be truth, it may be brilliant, and eloquent; but the effect is exactly that of the tinkling cymbal and the sounding brass. Why? The power of the Holy Ghost is not in it. Why do we read the Bible very often, and derive very little good from it? The power of the Spirit of God is not sought. Why do Christians quarrel among themselves, and Churchmen hate Dissenters, and Dissenters hate Churchmen? Because they have not the cementing power of the Holy Spirit of God in their hearts. When we see men quarrelling about baskets, we may depend upon it they are not very hungry; when we find ecclesiastics quarrelling about crotchets, we may be sure they have no very deep conviction of realities. As often as you see men disputing about one little jot on which they differ, and forgetting the ninety-nine magnificent things about which they are at one, they need the Holy Spirit of God to teach them better things. What is wanted in the present day in every sermon, in all our worship, and work, and way, is the power of the Holy Ghost.

How striking is the extraordinary feeling that at this moment spreads all over the United States and the northern parts of Ireland! When I first heard of it I thought it might be spasmodic, or be excited and kindled by those things by which we are sometimes, perhaps, rather unhappily distinguished. I would not say, mark you, that these scenes will not be charac-

terized by many things detracting from their beauty; I do not mean to say that there will not be extravagances. Satan crept into Paradise; Judas went among the Apostles; Peter even denied his Lord; Demas forsook Paul. Wherever there is a work of God the devil gets up a counter work of caricature; this you may expect; that there will be much alloy you may be sure. But now am I pronouncing hastily, am I speaking rashly, when I express my conviction that the calmness of this movement, the subduedness of it, not created by exciting preaching, not even originated in the church at all, but among the thousands outside of the church, is something like a wave from on high? May it not be as the first sprinkling of the last shower? And at all events, if there should be much in this that we may not be able to fall in with, is it not a blessed thought that it has altogether annihilated those unhappy ecclesiastical distinctions that split people asunder; that there is one vast brotherhood that has lasted for years? and seems not likely to subside. All that we can pray for is, that all the good of what is taking place in America and Ireland, without any of its alloy or its defects, may visit us too; and that God may make that day our day when he will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh; and not the Church, but the world; not ministers, but the people; not a sect, but the Church universal, shall be refreshed with the dews of God's blessing and with the influences of his Holy Spirit.

LECTURE IX.

EVENING LIGHT.

"At evening time it shall be light."—ZECHARIAH
xiv. 7.

It seems to be implied that our present economy is light and cloud, sunshine and shadow; neither the brilliancy of the perfect day nor the blackness of the absolute night; yet more of darkness than of light; but the promise is given to the blackest day that at evening-tide there shall flash forth, before the sun sets in his couch in the west, a burst of more than compensatory splendour. At evening-tide it shall be light. Why should God leave us in this economy with so many unsettled questions, unsolved difficulties, or, to use figurative language, with so much darkness intermingling with so much light? Why does he not shed down light upon every problem, give a solution to every difficulty, and enable us to see the past and the present, the infinite and the eternal, in all their unclouded magnificence and glory. It does not arise from any unwillingness in God to show us light, as if he delighted in darkness, or preferred the clouded day to the bright sunshine. His works, in as far as they are not marred by sin, are replete with beauty; his word is light; "God is light; and in him is no darkness at all." The Holy Spirit is the teacher of all light; his people are called the children of light; and light is employed as a figure to denote all that is beautiful, and pure, and holy, in the experience and world of man. There is no evidence, therefore, that God delights in darkness. What does it arise from? We are not ourselves suffi-

ciently prepared at present to know all; or cloud and sunshine, darkness and light, so intermingle and interpenetrate, that we must wait for evening-time to see light cast upon all, and be content at present with a day which is neither light nor darkness, but a mixture of shadow and of sunshine. We can see at once that the reason why we do not comprehend all is, not because God is dark; but because we are unenlightened. He is the Infinite, the Eternal, the Omnipresent; we are the finite, the limited, and the creatures of a day. How shall a finite vessel contain infinite good? How shall the finite grasp and comprehend the infinite, the eternal, the incomprehensible? How shall we, a dynasty of recent origin, understand even the event that sweeps past before us, when we know that the present event has links with the past, and interpenetrates with the future, and has relations in the height and in the depth that should make the most gifted humble, by teaching how little he really comprehends, and how limited is the horizon of the mightiest genius God gives to mankind? Our difficulty in comprehending and seeing all may arise from the very recency of our existence. The dynasty of man is only six thousand years old. What is this to epochs of which geology gives clear and distinct intimations? We have recently stepped upon a stage where everything is more or less new to us. Hence we are constantly correcting to-day the mistakes of yesterday, and sure of unlearning to-morrow what we learned and acquired to-day, and discovering more and more what even a Sir Isaac Newton needs to learn, what archangels may still learn—the vast chasm that there is between the most gifted of created intelligence and him who is the high and mighty God, who dwelleth in light inaccessible and full of glory. But were our finite capacity the only reason why we do not comprehend all, one would not be so humbled; there is another reason: the heart has lost its true polarity; it is infected by sin; and the understanding has to look through the hazy atmosphere that is around the heart in order to see the light and

noon of God's eternal day. How can we expect to see the sun reflected from a muddy pool? How can we hope to read through a lens that has been broken or smoked? How can we see clearly through an atmosphere dim and disturbed; not only dimmed by sin, but disturbed by tempests of passion? How can we see all clearly when, within the compass of our own horizon, there is so much disordered, deranged, and obscured? Well does the Apostle say, "The understanding is darkened." Why? "Because it is alienated from the light of God," and because of "the blindness of the heart:" the blindness of the heart having much to do with the dimness and weakness of the understanding.

In order to show you that this mingled light and darkness is not confined to any one sphere, province, or department of our experience, let me adduce two or three in which it may be illustrated. Let us look into creation. It is really wonderful how little we understand of it. The language of the Patriarch upon the plains of Shinar is as fresh and applicable to us in the present day as it was in his own, when he asked, speaking of some great philosopher, some proud sciolist, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner-stone thereof? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors; and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" Then he says again, "Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in search of the depth? Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof? Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetites of the young lions,

when they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait? Who provideth for the raven his food, when his young ones cry unto God?" These are questions we cannot answer; these show that the day of our knowledge of nature alone is darkness and light. We talk of light, and heat, and electricity, and gravity, and chemical attraction; but what are these? Clouds to conceal our ignorance. And when we have reached a great truth in science we have only got a stage deeper into the dense and impenetrable darkness that is beyond; till at last we discover that the more we know in nature the more remains to be still known; and that the known is merely the illuminated title-page of the unread and unknown. There is not a flower on the way-side, there is not a mineral in the earth, there is not a drop of water, there is not an atom of light, there is not a flash of lightning, there is not a peal of thunder, that are not shrouded in mystery: incidentally the cloud is riven, and a flash bursts through it, to show how little we know, and how justly our ignorance should hide pride from man.

Let us look into providential history; I mean, providence as developed in the world at large. Is it not a tangled skein? Do we not often find in it a labyrinth, with no thread equal to guide us through it? What explains the sufferings of good men, and the incidental success of bad men? How is it that often

"The good die first,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn down to their sockets!"

How is it, I ask, that we see sin rampant here, sickness there, pestilence elsewhere? You answer, and you answer very properly, It is sin that explains all. So it does; but this solution only sends us further back. Why is sin? If God be omnipotent, why did he not prevent the intrusion of it? If God be omnipotent now, why does he not crush it? The deeper we think, and the further we penetrate, like Milton's angels, we are the more in wondering mazes lost; till the deepest thinker, like the highest Christian, always sits down the

humblest man. We have read two chapters, one in creation, one in providence, where the day is neither night nor day; though in both is the hope that at evening-time it shall be light. Let me narrow the chapter of providence into a paragraph; that paragraph a personal one. Let any one, however lowly the level that he treads, ask himself, Why am I here? How have I come to be what I now am? Who shaped and rough-hewed my history? Who has brought me hitherto? Showers of troubles and bursts of sunshine have fallen upon you in your life's April day, and if any one trouble had been omitted from the shower, or ray from the light, your course had been altogether reversed. Have not what the world calls accidents, but what we may call providential incidents, overtaken you—sometimes overwhelmed you—till you felt as a flower beaten down by the hurricane and the storm? And yet that shower was meted out by God; and it did not come one drop too few, too light, or too short: it had its mission, and that mission was merciful: it had its errand to you, and that errand has left you where you are. There is not an individual who cannot look back at some little eddy in the current of his life, and say, If there had not been that eddy, my whole relationship, character, and course, had been revolutionized. It was the turning of a corner that made you the husband of that wife, the wife of that husband, or that lifted you to prosperity or honour. What explains all? The only explanation is, God superintending all; and though we cannot see the why, the wherefore, or the end, and though we often repine and fret, yet the optimist approaches nearest to the Christian who feels that, whatever comes, God is always in the right: where there is anything wrong, it lies at man's door.

Let us look at another chapter, revelation. Creation is full of inscrutable wonders; providence in its every chapter is replete with impenetrable mysteries. Are there no difficulties in revelation? What is election? what is God's sovereignty? what is the incarnation? what is the resurrection? what is free will? what is

grace? what is regeneration of heart? Words that express glimpses of great truths, dimly understood. If you ask me, Has God fixed the current of every individual's life? I say, Yes. Do you ask, then are we Mahometan fatalists? No; your duty is to act as if all depended upon that act; and yet Christians are chosen Christians before they were born. Do we comprehend this? can we explain it? No. Is it true, "No man can come unto me unless the Father draw him?" There is God's sovereignty: is it equally true, "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out?" Both are equally true. Can you reconcile God's sovereignty with my free will? I answer, No, I cannot, and it is of no use attempting it. Again, we speak of the Trinity. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there is but one God. Do you ask me to explain how there can be three, and yet one? I cannot; and the more I look at it the less I comprehend it. But, does that prove that the Bible is wrong? It only shows that it is in harmony with all God's other provinces. Creation is full of impenetrable mysteries; providence is full of impenetrable mysteries; and God's book is full of impenetrable mysteries too. And therefore it is no evidence that the Bible is not true that it has perplexities; it is only in harmony with creation and providence, having depths that we can never sound, and heights that we can never climb. Take the events that sweep past us. If anybody will be at the trouble to go over the history of the last six, or the last ten years, probably the most startling epoch since the beginning of the Christian era, he will find far more than he can comprehend. War breaks out here, peace suddenly closes its wounds there; nations seem as if struck by an electric shock, to become instantly convulsed; and then, as if some mighty power laid the influence, they become again composed and quiet. The tempest broods in the East, war-clouds gather in the West; till one leading daily reflector of public opinion very recently stated, that all Europe is now gazing at the black electric cloud

in the skies, charged with elements of destruction and ready to burst and overwhelm the earth. Who can explain these things? Go back some seven or eight years, when you heard nothing but prophecies of peace. In 1851, when that fairy vision, that beautiful creation, the Crystal Palace, burst like a gleam of heaven's sunshine upon the earth for a little, every one was congratulating his neighbour. Armies might be disbanded; navies might be burnt; nothing was to reign but peace; nothing to be reciprocated but love and brotherhood. Oh, what miserable prophets we were! How truly have facts contradicted the predictions! At this moment, cast a look on Europe. Let a reflecting mind, that can look below the surface, study it this very year. God only knows into what tempests it may soon burst, into what quiet bays its troubled waters and its restless surf may ultimately settle; the only thing we know is that, after all, it is but the surface that is troubled; just as the ocean under the heaviest storm that beats upon it, thirty or forty feet down is all calm and untroubled. Come storm, come tempest, come convulsion, come war, come pestilence, come plague, the Lord reigneth; he sitteth above the floods; he holds the reins. Not an atom can fall, not an injury can occur, not a convulsion take place, which he does not permit; and though we cannot see the why of the present troubled state, let us be still, and patient: at evening time it shall be light.

This introduces the last clause—the prediction of what shall be the issue of all: at evening time it shall be light. What does this prediction teach us? That there is light, though at present we cannot see that light. In other words, the world is not chaos, though it often seems to us to be so. The instant that the light settles upon what is taking place, we shall see that it was not chaos, nor confusion, but “all things working together for good to them that love God and are the called according to his purpose.” There has not been an accident on earth from the days of Adam and Eve in Paradise. What seem to us accidents

are, as they will be seen to have been at the evening time's light, the emissaries and the missionaries of God. In the second place, this idea, "at evening time it shall be light," teaches us, if we apply it to individual life, that it is but a day. The longest life has its morning, its noon, and its night. As long as we are under forty years of age, time feels rather heavy. The schoolboy thinks the holidays will never come; but when he comes to be a youth, he finds that the wheel revolves a little faster: still he thinks it will be a long time before he is settled in the meridian of manhood. But when he has reached forty-five he has reached the top of the hill; he then begins to descend, and he soon discovers how rapid the descent is, till at last, as he looks upon month succeeding month, and Christmas following Christmas, he exclaims, "Who could have thought this is 1860?" Our life is but a dream, a tale that is told, a fugitive shadow; like the grass that flourisheth and fadeth, or is cut down at noon. But there is an evening time, when it shall be light. Be patient. What God does you know not now, but hereafter, at evening time, you shall know. Then do not murmur and repine, for there will be an adjustment of all that is wrong, and the explanation of all that is difficult. Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for him; fret not because of evil doers; all things are just as they should be. Our conceptions are often in the wrong; God's works and ways are always in the right.

"At evening time it shall be light" teaches us another lesson, namely, the unexpectedness of God's solution of difficulties, and our extrication out of troubles. When the evening time comes, we expect the sun, to use the common language, to descend more and more, till we see but the mere rim of his disc above the western horizon, and at last he disappears. Then what do you expect? You expect the cool and enveloping, but dark shadow of night to settle on the earth. But instead, to your surprise, at evening time the order of nature seems reversed, and there breaks forth light. Now, such is the exact expression of

what our experience often is. A knock comes to your door; you think it is the hand of poverty: at evening time it is light—it is the hand of one that tells you of a fortune. The postman brings you a letter; your expectation is that it will be sorrowful and sad tidings from the gloomy East—it brings news that your son is promoted, that victory is in the van of your country's armies. A night of weeping overtakes you, and that night of weeping breaks in a morn of joy. You look up into the sky under the shadow of a great calamity; all is cold and dreary within, all is black and ominous without; not a star in your sky, nor a taper in your home, nor a coal on your hearth; you look still, and the great black cloud that was threatening to burst upon you, in the cold shadow of which you pined and were sorrowful, begins to turn out its lining of purple and of beauty and of glory; and if one sun has left you—the sun that shines from the meridian of day—ten thousand suns take his place, as stars in the sky,

“ Ever singing, as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine; ”

and you learn how sinful it is to forebode and distrust; how truly the prophet spoke when he said, “ At evening time it shall be light.” This is true in the case of each and of all, and in the experience of all. You have lost, perhaps, what was dear and precious to you. God in his providence has taken from you your wealth, your property, your estates; much that made life sunny and the heart happy. Your present construction of it is, “ All this is unmingled calamity.” You see the cloud only, the dark and shaded day. If you live long enough, you will see there was no chance, but an errand not only of wisdom, but of mercy and love. Many a soul in heaven will bless God through eternal ages that he was confined for years to a sick-bed, or was deprived of the property he made his god; for the loss dimmed the sheen of terrestrial things, made heaven seem nearer and earth appear more worthless, and weaned the heart from a world it was clinging to, too closely. The key-

note of many a joyous anthem in heaven will be, "It was good for me that I was thus afflicted." Or perhaps you have lost your nearest, dearest, and best beloved. You sit down under the cold shadow of this great calamity, and you see no light; you walk, or rather you sit in darkness; you ponder, you seek direction from God, you look up to Him for light, and you find at the evening time of life's saddest and most sorrowful day there breaks forth light; you discover you have got a new grave in which you have an interest on earth, but over it a new mansion, in which you have an interest in heaven. You have lost one tie that knit you to this world, and you have gained another that lifts and attracts you to heaven. Often in our individual, spiritual, and Christian experience, we find the same thing, especially in the evening of life. Youth is the morning, manhood is the noon and the meridian, old age is the evening of life. The shadow becomes longer, the weight becomes heavier; a thousand things begin to show, whether we like to look at it or not, that man is going to his long home. What a happy thing if, as the heart begins to stand still, it ponders more deeply upon better and brighter things! if the grey hair be the reflected light of the better land! When you take a retrospect at that evening time of the past, do you not often discover that your bitterest cup was your best; that your heaviest sorrow was God's greatest mercy; that your protracted illness was wholesome medicine; that your disappointments, aches, and cross winds, the obstructions, the rugged road, and all the difficulties you met in your long journey, were all as wise as they were well; and your evening is so light, because God never forsook you in your morning, or left you to yourself in meridian day? And when we come to that hour that comes to all, when the body shall go the way of all the earth, and the spirit shall go the way of all souls, what joy in a light that we see for the first time, the evening light, to look back upon the whole of life, and to discover that in the variegated web of life, not one thread in its warp or woof was out of place; that there

was not one tear that was not expedient; that there was not one pang that was not of God and from God. Oh, what a blessed and beautiful evening light will that be, when one can say with Paul, "I am now ready to depart; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness; which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day!"

And when the evening light of this world shall come—for I believe that as this dispensation draws to its close, the light that will shine upon it will be its brightest—when we shall see the last chapter of its history, and read it in that soft and holy evening light, we shall then find that, after all, right was might, and truth was victory; we shall see no more through a glass darkly, but face to face. Then creation shall be lifted out of its shadow, and we shall understand its mysteries; inexplicable events will be made plain; sore tribulations will be explained; our disappointments will be set in their true light; we shall see that God was always in the right, that our suspicions and murmurings were always in the wrong. Then mistakes will be rectified: we shall miss many a loud professor in that holy light of whom we were sure that he was going to heaven, and taking many with him; and we shall find many a happy possessor there, who said little, but did much; who also bent the knee in prayer, but as often moved the foot in duty and in obedience to God's word. We shall there, too, discover that many, who thought themselves antagonists, were working in the same harvest-field, and binding up the same sheaf for the Lord of the harvest; and that blows that we thought struck for a party were overruled by God for the good of all mankind. Then we shall see that the worst was well; we shall see why He gave, and why He took away; why that generous man was poor, and could not give; and why that selfish man was rich, and would not give; why the worthless were spared, and the brightest and best were taken. We shall see that under the splendid prosperity we envied, there were abysses

we did not know ; and that the sorest trials we deprecated were the seals of affection, the tokens of love ; and that the heavy storms, and the hard rough road, and all the ills and aches we encountered, were let loose by God to quicken our journey home.

Let us learn humility and submission. Our ignorance fails to comprehend, our impatience frets because we cannot do so. We wrangle with Providence ; we complain of our position ; we dispute about our difficulties ; we think the ways of God are wrong. It is our ignorance that is dense ; it is our impatience that is fretful ; it is our ways that are crooked. Trust where you cannot comprehend ; lean on an Omnipotence that you cannot now grasp. Cease to charge God foolishly. God is ever right, even when He is inscrutable. Never forget God is love to-day ; He will be to us love to-morrow ; and when we shall see the love that God is to-day in the light of that blessed evening of to-morrow, our greatest grief will be that we ever murmured and complained ; and our greatest thankfulness that we could say over the grave that received our dead, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord : " after the hurricane that swept our homes, what the Patriarch could also say, " Shall we receive good from the Lord, and not evil ? " And then we shall see the whole of creation, the whole of providence, the whole of individual life, the whole of Christian life, the whole of revelation, no longer a mystery, no longer light and shadow, but a brilliant transparency, where all is light and love, and we the happy possessors of it for ever and ever.

LECTURE X.

THE STANDING MIRACLE.

There is a great feature which accompanies the procession of the ages to the very end of this dispensation. It is

"This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."—MATTHEW XXIV. 34.

WHAT is the generation specified here? We have a key to it in the previous parable of the fig-tree. The fig-tree was used as the symbol of the Jewish nation; as such our Lord blasted it. He found it without fruit, though clothed with magnificent leaves, such as ought to have embosomed fruit; and finding it so he blasted it. Now, he says one of the tokens of the approaching eve of the world's long week will be the budding of the fig-tree. In the buds of spring you have the young prophets of the approaching summer. As soon as you see the shoots begin to peep out from the dark, hard bark, you have a token of the nearness of the sweet sunshine; not of the summer of England, lost in the cold and dreary winter, but of the everlasting summer, whose sunrise shall have no western setting. Who is meant by this fig-tree? The Jews; and therefore it is predicted of them that this race, or generation, shall not pass away till the end. I admit that of this place some critics have taken an opposite view. The common opinion and interpretation is that "this generation" means a race of forty years. *γενεα* is used occasionally in classic writers in this sense; but it is used also in classic writers, and always in Hellenistic Greek, to mean a race, a nationality, a class. I do

not quote passages that every scholar is more or less familiar with.

But the real use of *γενεα*, here translated "generation," is to be gathered not so much from classic as from scriptural use. The Greek Septuagint and the Greek New Testament are in this matter our proper guides to what is the exact interpretation of the passage. Stier, the most learned and evangelical of all the German critics of the present day, asserts that beyond all dispute the *γενεα* that is not to pass away—the generation that is to outlive all these things—is the Jewish race. I was no less pleased to find that the Dean of Canterbury, Mr. Alford, in his "Critical Commentary," thinks it is beyond critical dispute that *γενεα* here means the Jewish race, and in no degree the arbitrary interpretation of a race of thirty or forty years, as held by some unripe scholars. Let us see some of the grounds on which we come to this conclusion. We notice, first of all, there is not one previous word about the Jews or Jerusalem when he introduces this verse. If he had at that very moment been speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, of the dispersion of the Jews, and the fall of the Jewish dynasty, one might refer it to an existing generation; for it is a fact that forty years after these words were spoken, Jerusalem was laid in ruins, and the Jews were dispersed. But the subject he has been speaking of is as follows:—"Immediately after those days shall the sun be darkened; then shall appear the sign of the Son of man; then shall the tribes of the earth mourn; they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." If "this generation" means the forty years' race that were living then, what must we infer? That all these things have been fulfilled. Has Christ then come like the lightning? Have the angels gathered

his elect from the four winds of heaven? Have all the tribes of the earth mourned? Has the sign of the Son of man been seen? Has the lightning-splendour that heralds the approaching Lord burst upon a world that expected it not? The man would be insane who would assert that all these things have come to pass. But this generation, we are told, is to outlive them all, to be cotemporaneous with all the events that are here described; and only to be absorbed in the collective nationalities of mankind, that is, in the Church of Christ, when all these things have occurred, and the Son of man has come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Another argument to me conclusive in favour of this interpretation is the thirty-sixth verse: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." If you ask many readers of the New Testament, they will quote that text as a reason for not studying the chronology of Scripture prophecy; and they will say, "Of that hour knoweth no man," which is quite true, "except my Father in heaven." But if this *γενεα* meant the race then living, who were to live thirty years—the average length of a generation—then, instead of no man knowing the day and the hour, our blessed Lord must have announced it, for he said it would take place in the limits of a generation; and the Jews to whom he spoke these words knew it, for they knew what was the average length of a generation. Our Redeemer would be represented, if the interpretation be true, as contradicting himself; first saying it will take place within the limits of forty years, and then saying that the day and the hour, meaning the time, no man knoweth, no, not the angels that are in heaven. Therefore I infer that Dean Alford's interpretation is the true one. I may state that Strauss, the infidel German writer, takes *γενεα* in the sense in which Barnes and Matthew Henry, most excellent men in their way, and most sound in doctrine, though not good critical interpreters of difficult passages of Scripture, have taken it; and he argues, with irresistible

effect, that our Lord was contradicted by the facts of the case. Strauss says, Jesus predicted that that generation, which would live thirty years, should not pass away till all these things were fulfilled; but, Strauss says, history proves that all these things have not been fulfilled; that the Son of man is not come like the lightning, that he is not come in the clouds of heaven; that the angels have not gathered together his elect; and his inference, if the interpretation be correct, is most logical—namely, that our blessed Lord here contradicts himself. The last argument I adduce against the common view is this—that long after Jerusalem had sunk in its ruins, and the ploughshare of the Roman had passed through its magnificent remains, the Apostles and the Christians constantly looked and prayed for the second personal coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. When did John write the Apocalypse? It was begun in the year 96; but the year 96 was some sixteen years after the destruction of Jerusalem. If, therefore, this referred entirely to the destruction of Jerusalem, and all these things were to transpire then, and Christ was then to come, what does John mean by proclaiming, sixteen years after that event, “He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him?” And what does he mean by closing that magnificent Apocalypse, which has all the grandeur and procession of a gorgeous drama, but all the reality of sober and of literal fact, by saying, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,” if so be that he had come within the limits of the generation that had already passed away? I cannot quote all the passages illustrating the use of this word, but I may mention one or two where it unquestionably means not a generation of thirty years, but a race of men; or, as we should call it in modern phrase, a nationality. For instance, in Matthew xxiii. 36, he says, “Verily, I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.” The Greek word is *γενεα*. What things were to come upon it?—“Behold, I send you prophets, and ye shall kill them, and ye shall scourge them, that upon you may

come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew." That generation did not slay these martyrs; it was the Jewish race that existed from the beginning, and slew these martyrs. And therefore our blessed Lord, in this passage, lays to the charge of that generation the slaughter of Zacharias, and the slaughter of men, from the blood of righteous Abel downwards; showing that he employs the word γενεα, not in the sense of an existing generation, but of a race or nationality of people. In a passage of Psalm xxiv., David speaks of the righteous, "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O God of Jacob."

"This generation" is exactly parallel to another phrase used by Luke, in chapter xxi. 23, where he says, "Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people." Now, here is one evangelist calling "this generation" "this people;" the very commentary that we want; and proving therefore, incontestably, that the generation is the race of the Jews, whose existence shall be co-eval with the fulfilment of all the prophecies recorded in this chapter, outlast and outlive them all, till absorbed in the universal church, when Christ and Christian shall be all and in all.

Let us look now for the fulfilment of this. First, the Jew exists in every land in all the intensity of his first insulation; his look and countenance demonstrative, beyond dispute, of his eastern origin; and that full, deep, rich-toned, thorough-bass voice, so unlike the cracked voices of northern nations, indicating his birthplace also. His thoughts, his hopes, his affinities, his sympathies, have outlived the rush of eighteen hundred years; and the Jew on the streets of London is strictly and literally the descendant of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and the patriarchs, and Moses, and Aaron; and there is not a poor ragged Jew in London that cannot boast of an ancestry in comparison of which

that of England's proudest nobles is only of yesterday, and scarcely to be spoken of in the same breath. His identity has never been nor can be disputed. The language which he still loves, the language of his prayers, his praises, and his hopes, is that in which the law was thundered, which sounded in the songs sung by the captives in the midst of Babylon, when they hung their harps upon the willows; the language I have heard and joined in in his synagogue, in singing the psalms, with a reference, however, that would to God he had in his heart also—a reference to Him who is the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel. That language was heard in the temple; it gleamed from the stones upon the breast of the high priest; it echoed in the glorious strains of David; it was heard in the synagogue; it was the sacred vehicle of the sublimest thoughts—the most ancient and majestic of human tongues. Who can deny that the Jew upon our streets retains all the identity of his connection with the Jew of eighteen hundred years or two thousand years ago? Let us mark, what is so striking, the contrast he presents to all other races;—the Greek, the Roman, and the Carthaginian are gone; there are more descendants of Cæsar and Regulus probably in London than in Rome at this moment. The wild Albanian is scarcely the descendant of Homer, and Sophocles, and Euripides, and Socrates, and the heroes of Marathon and the conquerors of Thermopylæ. These nations cannot produce one single fragment of genealogy to demonstrate their national succession; or any sheet of parchment or tablet of stone in which they can trace and prove their national family. These streams are merged in the great river of humanity, and are sweeping onward to the boundless and absorbing main. But the Jew is unmistakeably the descendant of those that, alas! crucified the Lord of Glory; but he is also the father of those that will shout, "Hosannah! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

In order to show the Lord's prophecy fulfilled in

every detail, mark this singular fact—no nation has been so persecuted, so ill-treated, as the Jew. He has been branded with every vile epithet; his name is synonymous in the popular speech with all that is vulgar, avaricious, and mean. If you ask some of these men, Why do you thus treat the Jew? I have heard Christians answer by referring to the predictions about him. “It is predicted that he is to be a slave, to be crushed, to have no rest for the soles of his feet, among all lands; and we are only doing what prophecy prescribes.” I answer, precepts of charity and loving-kindness belong to us; God, who gives the prophecy, will look to its fulfilment; He does not require our aid to enable him to fulfil his promises. Let us quote commandments for our duties; let us leave predictions for their fulfilment to the God that inspired them. In poverty, in wealth—under republic, and despotism—the Jew has been persecuted. From the Czar of all the Russias to the Republic of America, the Jew has been evil entreated. Like the flying-fish, that has no peace in any element, the Jew, whether rich or poor, whether under republic, limited monarchy, or despotism, has been equally persecuted and maltreated. The fire and the faggot have been used under royal countenance before now; imprisonment and torture were his common treatment in the middle ages. The only lands where the Jew has been sympathised with in his ruin, though we never doubt that he has inherited a curse that he cannot shake off till the great Curse-Bearer shall take it away—the only lands where he is not persecuted—are those where a pure and Protestant Christianity prevails. And singular enough (I hope you will not think it is taking to one’s own country more than belongs to it) the Jew quotes Scotland as the only country in which he has never been maltreated in his past. Singular enough, also, those people that quote the prophecies of his curse, and ill-treat him, seem purposely to omit the prophecies of his restoration, which embosom the encouragement, that they that bless him shall be blessed; and that God will bless the man that tries to

lighten the load and to mitigate the curse of his suffering, weary-footed, broken-hearted, and sorrowing people Israel. But, strange to say, the treatment that would have extinguished every nation upon earth has only crowded the Jew more intensely to his synagogue and his country; and what has annihilated others and would annihilate us, has, in the case of the Jew, acted like the fire upon his own burning bush; the more it has burnt the brighter it has blazed, the greener have been its twigs, unscathed and unscorched even in the depth of the consuming fire. We find in these facts the identity of the Jew still maintained; the existence of the Jewish race in its integrity; there being now eleven millions of Jews more or less insulated throughout the whole world. We have here the fulfilment of a prophecy stronger than fire, or flood, or force, or persecution; for the least word that God has spoken is more powerful than the mightiest weapons that the greatest dynasties can wield. Thus we prove the fulfilment of the prediction, "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled." And what shows not only their existence, but that they have prospered even in the depths of persecution, is the extraordinary fact that the Jew is the money-lender of cabinet, of congress, and divan. He is at this moment the great banker of the world. There are some Jewish names that would bring more money in ten days than the House of Lords would bring together in ten years. You will find the Jew in Petersburg, in Paris, in Vienna, in Berlin, in every capital, the representative of wealth; in whose presence the very men that have crushed him cringe when they want assistance; and before whom those that in their hearts despise him are constrained, by a mysterious instinct that tells us they are the men of destiny, to bow down and recognize a power stronger than dynasties, mightier than armies, more lasting than the governments of the world. Now how can you account for all these phenomena? Only by the prediction of God, "This race shall not pass away." They are the only people that have a country

and do not live in it; that have a capital to which their hearts cling as the needle vibrates to the pole, as infants to their mother, as England's most patriotic sons to their home; the Jew's heart's affections cling and cluster around Jerusalem. He still says in his synagogue, with an emphasis that no description of mine can exaggerate, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, and my right hand forget its cunning." And that capital shall be theirs again. When the Euphrates shall be dried up—when the crescent shall have waned, as it is waning fast—we shall read some morning of a glorious exodus, far more majestic than that of old; when from all lands, like converging streams and currents, God's ancient people, with their hearts and their hopes in Jerusalem, shall rush together; and every railway and steamer shall make them welcome; and some of us may live to see the Jew again in his own ancient capital; and some of us may hear in Gethsemane, on Calvary, in the garden of Arimathea, voices rich in music, and richer still because the hearts of the singers are in them, singing, "Crown him Lord of all; Hosannah, Hosannah in the highest; lo, this is our God, we have waited for him; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Or, in the words of one of the most magnificent anthems in a book which contains so much that is magnificent—the English Prayer-Book, "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. We believe that thou wilt come to be our Judge. We therefore pray thee, help thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood; and number us with thy saints in glory everlasting."

LECTURE XI.

THE FINALLY SAVED.

There has been much to endure in every age and on every spot of Christendom ; there is little to enjoy drawn from this world, and much to endure inseparable from our passage through it.

“ But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”—MATTHEW xxiv. 13.

THE early Christians passed to heaven amid whirlwinds of persecution ; the cross in their heart was the mark the marksmen aimed at : the form of our trials may be altered, but in some shape they remain ; and our duty is embosomed in the intimation, that if we endure the trials unto the end we shall be saved. It is a fair subject of inquiry, where and from whence do we expect these trials ? First of all, from our own heart. If you have a regenerated heart, there is still much in it of alloy, in affinity with the world, with Satan, with temptation, and with sin. If our own heart had its way, it would prefer to be wafted to heaven amid aromatic perfume, and on the wings of gentle gales, and spared the struggle, and the conflict, and the wear and tear of Christian faithfulness. Besides, there is in every man's bosom a diverging influence that tends to draw him aside. Who that knows his own heart best does not feel it throwing up from its unsounded depths, temptations, thoughts, desires, passions, affinities, longings, lusts, appetites ? These things thrust themselves in as foes that the Christian repels. It is the mark of the worldling that he gives them hospitality as friends whom he joyfully welcomes. But against all these we must be watchful, in this era of great tribu-

lation. Let us endure, that is, bravely meet and patiently bear them—be conquerors through Him that loved us; and having done all to stand. We are exposed to the wiles and the machinations of Satan. The existence of the devil is not a myth, nor a romance, nor a metaphor, as the celebrated Strauss would have it; his existence is a mournful experience, his successes are tragedies in high life and in low life; an apostle was not exempt from his action. “Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat.” What avenue he will select to thy heart, what passion he will fan into burning flame, what besetting sin he will mount and ride to victory, God only knows; he will make the experiment, it is his trade, he is drilled and practised in it; he goeth about a wicked wanderer, ever seeking whom he may devour; but, blessed thought, he is a coward, he is beaten; resist the devil, and he will flee from you; deny him, and he will prevail; mock at him, and he will thank you; pronounce him a myth, and he will cheer you; but resist him, and he will flee from you; hear sounding from the skies when the assault is hottest and the trial is bitterest, “He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved.” In the third place, the world will also assault you: ambition, that tempting and fascinating passion, will spread before the lustful and the envious eye its thrones, its pomp, and its splendour; it will urge you to mount that ladder on which the few have risen to fame, concealing the tens of thousands who lie at its foot scattered and disjointed wrecks; he will tempt you to seek the bubble reputation even at the cannon’s mouth, to sacrifice all that is pure, holy, beautiful and good, in order to grasp so much trash that may be grasped thus, or in order to have your name pronounced with *éclat*, to have yourself spoken of as great; not knowing that when you have attained the end—and it is the few that succeed, it is the multitude that are trampled and beaten down—the issue is not worth a tithe of the price. What glittered like a resplendent lake in the distance is only the mirage, the sunbeams reflected from the scorching sand; and like

David, who, when seated on a throne, the whole world at his feet, cried, what the human heart will still cry, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest." And the world, in the next place, will assail you in the shape of Mammon, the god of the age, before whose shrine so much faithfulness, so much justice, so much kindness, are constantly sacrificed. He will tell you, you must make haste to be rich; thousands are in the race, and you will only succeed by putting forth all your strength, and running at the very top of your speed. Never care, he will tell you, what you trample down; if your competitor falls, just make him a pathway to lift you a little higher, and to help you on a little quicker; do not mind cheating, do not mind lying, do not mind false advertising, do not mind all sorts of deception: "Money; honestly, if you can get it by honesty; but if not, get money at any sacrifice, and at any price." If you have got money, what is its worth? "What shall it profit a man if"—what is not certain—"if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" It is written upon all the fortunes of the millionaire, it is written upon all the feelings of his own innermost heart, "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again;" but the poorest widow, that

"Knows no more, her Bible true,"

knows and feels this, and rejoices while she feels it, "But whoso drinketh of the living water that I shall give him shall never thirst; for it shall be in him a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life." It is the proof of the ruin of the soul that it seeks to satisfy itself with the things of this world; it is the proof of its grandeur that all that is in the world together fails to satisfy it. Resist the temptations of ambition, resist the seductions of Mammon; hear in the midst of the struggle and the competitorship of both, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

Sin in all its phases, and fascinating aspects, will seek

to seduce you. Your ear is open, we know from the fallen nature that is in us, to its siren strains; the eye has not a covenant made with it in every instance, and is open to its vast attractions. We breathe a tainted air, we live in an infected world; we stand, if unwatchful, in jeopardy every moment; we need grace sufficient for us; let us seek that grace, and let us hear the cheering encouragement from Him that gives it, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved."

Error will assail you. Truth is an exotic in this world; error is an indigenous plant. At one time error comes in the shape of liberality, latitudinarianism, denying every distinctive truth, and preaching the popular aphorism, "It does not matter what a man believes, if he does what is honest, it will be all right with him." At another time error will come in all the robes of a rigid and exclusive sectarianism, telling you that unless you can pronounce my shibboleth, and repeat my creed, and subscribe my dogmas, you cannot be saved. But by being forewarned you are thereby forearmed. The Bible has no sympathy with latitudinarianism, which makes vital truth or deadly error a matter of indifference; it has no sympathy with the hard and exclusive sectarianism which perils one's everlasting prospects on the acceptance of a crotchet; it is liberal in all things that are non-essential, it is strict and uncompromising in all things that are essential; its grand characteristic being unity in things essential, liberality in things that are non-essential, and charity in all things, essential and non-essential. In holding fast the great truths of the Gospel, in acting out those truths, which is a greater difficulty than holding them fast, you will be met in every sphere and stage of the world with opposition, persecution, resistance, even to the death. The world cannot burn you, but it can deride you; and to some sensitive minds that are not hardened by experience, a gibe, a sneer, is even more intolerable than a blow. The world is so peculiar in its creed, if creed it may be said to have, that the

moment you show any feeling to religion above zero, or enthusiasm on subjects of everlasting moment, or a determination to carry out your principles into everyday practice, it will denounce you as a bigot, your religion will be branded as ultra Protestantism, your zeal will be denounced as fanaticism. The world will allow you to be as earnest, as eloquent as you like at the hustings, when you are wanting a place in parliament; and it will say, "What an able man! what a worthy candidate for our borough!" The world will allow you in the House of Commons to speak with all the burning enthusiasm of an indignant patriot, in order to reduce the income-tax from one shilling and ninepence to sevenpence; the world will admire and engage the barrister who pleads as if it were a death-struggle for his client; the world esteems the merchant who is up at sunrise and goes to bed at sunset, and scarcely takes his meals, in order to forestall the market, and to make a larger per centage to-day than he made yesterday. Enthusiasm, earnest and burning enthusiasm, immense earnestness, the world admires and applauds even to the very echo these things. But show that you believe the awful realities of death, of judgment, of eternity to come; that you believe the soul is of infinite grandeur, and that its salvation outweighs worlds upon worlds in its value; that you believe what the Bible says, that you live as the Bible bids, and that you dare do what the Bible commands, and the world that will insist on enthusiasm when its own interests are at issue, brands your enthusiasm as fanaticism, your decision as bigotry; and thinks it such a pity that these canting Christians should make such a stir about Sabbaths, and about Bibles, and about sanctuaries, and about all those subjects that trouble and plague the earnest and the great men of the world, who look above these things, and deal with nobler topics, and contemplate far more momentous issues. Be not discouraged; what you can prove to be duty, cleave to; leave for its sake all that man loves, face for its sake all that man fears; count all but loss for the

excellency of it; lay down wealth and health, lay down money and estates; concede the largest husk of prejudice, or preference, or prepossession, if it will conciliate a brother; but compromise not the least vital truth if it were to conciliate all mankind. "He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved."

But instead of dwelling upon this, the ordinary opposition that you have to meet, let me try to show those forms of religion, those shades and systems of belief, which will not endure, but must collapse in the ordeals to which they will be subjected in a world which tests the real every-day, and rejects all that is pretentious. My argument is, that nothing will endure but vital, evangelical, scriptural Christianity; that nothing will weather what it has to encounter except a heart regenerated by the Spirit of God; a faith that grasps the Saviour; a hope that rides at the anchor sure and steadfast—in other words, real, living, heart-felt religion, that alone will last and endure. But there are various types of religion that seek its place, none of which will endure: to know them is to be warned and guarded against them. There is, for instance, the religion of mere impulse. You hear one day a stirring sermon; it startles you from the lethargy of years; you are roused; you are excited to a very high degree; you think you are now a Christian. Excitement is not conviction: the feelings may be excited, and the heart may remain dead in trespasses and in sins, and as soon as the exciting force is expended the excited feelings will subside; the flame will die from want of fuel, and the cinders and the embers, cold and worthless, will be all that remain. Tears and smiles are like April showers and sunshine; the one do not make religion, and the other are not yet the summer. There is a religion from personal attachment. It seems almost an absurd thing; but he that knows human nature well knows it is a fact, that some persons accept a religion because it is fashionable, or because it is the adoption of some one to whom he or she is deeply attached. You hear a preacher whom

you esteem, whose character, whose conduct, whose personal worth, you admire, or to whom you are personally, through relationship or friendship, attached; and you look at all he says in the light of the esteem and affection you bear him; and you believe what he says just because you admire and love the man. But this is not religion: the advocate changes, the toy loses its gilding, the relationship is disturbed, an incident upsets your conviction, and you return to the religion that you had, or, rather, to the negative religion that you once cherished: yours is not a faith that will endure to the end. There is the religion of sentiment; not the religion of conviction nor of the adoption of the heart, but purely of the imagination. It indulges tender and sentimental emotions; it covers up every awful truth in theology with flowers and with perfume; it turns the most sacred truths into plaintive music for its amusement; it is the sentimentality of piety, extremely beautiful; it spends its time in working laces for altar-cloths, in preparing priests' robes, in decorating the altar with flowers, in fitting the sanctuary to all the phases of the varying senses and seasons; it is the religion of painters, of poets, of architects, of ecclesiastical dressmakers and robemakers; it is the piety of Athens and the Academy, not of Jerusalem and the Church of God; it shrinks from the storm; it dreads defiling its delicate Sabbath-day and saint-day robes; it has no martyrs; it scarcely lives; it cannot endure; its advocates, as such, will not be saved in the end. There is the religion of intellect; a very striking and, so far, commendable form. The understanding is convinced that Christianity is true; it believes its every dogma from the commencement of the Creed to the Amen at its close; it is a religion clear in the head, but cold as an icicle at the heart's core; it has no vital force, no warm and sanctifying energy; it is orthodoxy, not regeneration; it is light in the head, without love in the heart; it is clear, but cold; it is the religion of the devils, who believe every word of the Creed, and, whilst they do so, tremble. And if your religion is wholly the religion of

the intellect, however clear, however tenaciously held, unless it has transformed the heart it will not endure to the end. There is, in the next place, a religion which may seem to you at first blush a true and scriptural religion, namely, the religion of conscience. But that religion is not the religion of God, and will not endure. It is a powerful type of religion, and, in its place, a form of it that one must respect: one always must respect the man who is conscientious even when he is wrong. Because a man is conscientious in his adhesion to error, it makes me respect him; but, because it is error that he adheres to, it makes me try to extricate him from the meshes of that error, not to accept the error as true. Now, wherever there is the religion of conscience, its whole leverage is terror; it drives to duty, it scares to what is right; it torments you if you neglect to pray, it threatens you if you fail in the least service; it is really most repulsive, its duties are drudgery, its service is slavery; it dreads the devil, and fears not God; it is not the religion of Christ; it is a religion that will not endure. There is the religion of the natural affections, than which nothing is more amiable, beautiful, or lovely; and yet it is a religion that will not endure. Its sphere is the home, its shrine is the fireside, every earthly relationship is glorified by it, and yet it is not that religion that will endure to the end. There is the religion of tradition; men believe what their fathers believed; but this religion is not the religion of the Bible; it is not the religion of truth. We build upon the sand, not upon the rock; we believe in our fathers, not in the Apostles; we rest upon a tradition handed down through centuries, venerable for years; but if tested by that test before which truth alone can stand, and error must ever fall, it will not endure unto the end. There is another type of religion—the religion of form. It feeds on beautiful pageants, it is charmed with glorious rites; it would not worship in any but a mediæval church; it would not listen to anything short of Mozart's and Handel's choicest pieces. With it the altar occupies the place of God, the sign

of the cross Christianity itself; broad phylacteries, and holy places, and beautiful churches, constitute the sum and substance of the religion of form. There is no endurance in it; it collapses the moment it is exposed to trouble. The ear may be engaged, the eye may be gratified, the country may be covered with beautiful cathedrals; but it may be empty of hearts that beat with love to God, and of souls that would die rather than sacrifice vital and essential truth.

What is then the religion that will endure? The religion of the head—its roots in the intellect; the religion of the heart—its roots striking down there also; the religion of the conscience—its law, its atmosphere, its motive power; but all three inspired and taught by the Holy Spirit of God. This religion accepts Christianity because it is true, loves it because it is the manifestation of love, obeys it because it is duty, and ever sings and shouts, and triumphs while it shouts, "I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." This religion is not the mountain-torrent fed by the shower, leaving its channel dry when the clouds are emptied of their contents; but the stream that moves on through belts of greenness, sprinkles all its banks with odorous flowers, until it mingles and is lost amid the mighty main; it is as the oak that waves its branches in the storm, strikes its roots deeper in the tempest, develops itself in the sunshine, and in winter and in summer makes progress towards God, and heaven, and happiness. He that thus believes, that thus lives, and grows, has in him a religion that will overcome the assaults of Satan, that will vanquish all the temptations of Mammon, that will turn aside all the shafts and arrows of ambition, and pride, and pomp, and vainglory; and, enduring to the end, its holy and its happy possessor will be saved.

Pray that this religion may be written on your hearts; pray that God's Holy Spirit may teach your hearts what I can only teach the ear. Never forget, humbling as it is, and it is most humbling, that all the

eloquence of Demosthenes, all the argumentative powers of *Æschines*, all the persuasive language of a *Cicero*, combined and concentrated in every sermon that you hear, will only be like the tinkling cymbal and the sounding brass, unless the Spirit of God carry it home to your heart, and make it life; to your conscience, and make it law; to your intellect, and make it a conviction; to the whole man, and make you a new creature in Christ Jesus. And while you hold this creed, never forget we are on the winning side. The great majority is, after all, with truth; the minority is on the side of Satan. All the angels in heaven agree with us; all the saints in glory agree with us; the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, the glorious company of the Apostles, agree with us. And not only are we in the majority, but success is as sure as the promises of God; and he that leans, and looks up, and trusts, and perseveres, has a promise that will fail when God's throne is overthrown, and heaven and earth have passed away, and only then; "He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved." Great Babylon shall be cast down as a millstone into the depths of the sea; thrones shall be overturned, dynasties shall all be changed; there shall be earthquakes, and plagues, and pestilences, and famines, nation rising up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be changes in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and in the hearts of kings perplexity, and distress of nations, men's hearts failing them for fear of the things that are coming on the earth: but he that endureth, he that clings to the Rock of Ages, he that trusts in the living God, has given unto him eternal life; "and none," says he who never spake but what was truth, "shall pluck him out of my hand." Your trials will only be to you what the fire is to the steel; your afflictions will only be to you what the furnace is to the gold; you will be purified through them and by them; until, reaching the end of the rugged road, and the flinty path, and the thorny way that you have long trod, you appear amid that white-robed group who are

welcomed into heaven, not as natives, but as colonists ; and of whom one asks, startled by their splendour, struck by the novelty of the scene, and amazed at the overwhelming multitude, "What are these, and whence came they?" Here is the true church, in which there is no sect, nor exclusiveness, nor bigotry, nor latitudinarianism, nor error : "These are they." Who? The Churchman would say, "Who came out of our body;" and probably the Dissenter might say, "Who came out of our body;" and the Church of Rome, to a dead certainty, would say, "Who belong to us:" but Christ's Church is larger, ampler, nobler, more glorious than all this. "These are they," and these are Churchmen indeed, "who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night without ceasing."

LECTURE XII.

THE LAST CONFLAGRATION.

A day of no common glory will rise one day on the world. A scene of unprecedented splendour and awe will be reflected from it.

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”—MATTHEW xxiv. 27.

To guard God's people against everything like a misapprehension of the true epoch of the advent of Him whose right it is to reign, it is predicted that he shall not be found in the secret places. We are not to listen to any one who says, “Behold, he is in the desert; behold, he is in the secret chamber;” for here is the grand characteristic of his advent—“As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of man be.”

The very first truth taught by this similitude is that Christ's advent shall be sudden; unexpected by the masses; like the flash that leaps from the bosom of the black cloud, sweeps through the sky, and completes its journey in an instant. So shall the coming of the Son of man be. No telegraphic announcement, no roll of drum, no roar of cannon, no clanging of bells will announce His approach. Unexpected by the mass of mankind, there shall burst upon the world one red lightning flash that shall close the age in which we have so deep a stake, and commence that glorious one in which I trust many have so bright and so sure a hope. His advent will also be with intense and vivid

splendour. The lightning fills the whole world ; leaps from the east, and finds its lair only in the remote and distant west. When not the light, but the searching lightning of that day shall come, it will penetrate the cell of the captive, irradiate with more than the splendours of noon the deepest and the darkest dungeon of the earth ; enter cabinet, and congress, and parliament, and divan ; search the heart of each individual through all its most sequestered nooks, its most hidden crannies, its supposed impenetrable recesses. It will rush through every cell of the soul—make luminous the page of every memory ; till sins we had thought annihilated will start into preternatural freshness, and iniquities we had forgotten will be displayed in all their portentous outlines ; and each man's soul shall be as legible to the universe as tree and rock are legible in the dark night in the lightning that leaps with successive and continuous flashes from the east to the distant west. If such shall be the suddenness of our Lord's advent, what an arrest, if it be possible to conceive such a thing, will take place. The world will be going on when Christ comes as it does at this moment. The farmer sowing the seed in spring, or reaping the golden harvests of autumn, in an instant will see that the harvest of the earth is come, and that angels are the reapers. The poet in the midst of his stanza, the painter surveying his unfinished sketch—the judge on the bench, the prisoner in the dock, the jury in the box, the preacher in the pulpit, the tradesman in his shop, the monarch in his palace—will feel instantly arrested, and discover that time is now to plunge into eternity. The ocean steamer will suddenly pause as it ploughs the deep ; the railway train at its greatest speed will stand still ; the bridal procession will stop midway ; the funeral march will cease ere it reach the grave ; armies marshalled to battle will lay down their arms, and look and marvel ; and the living torrents that rush through every street of this great metropolis, as if struck by some terrible paralysis, will stand still, and find that the day of the final adjustment of all

accounts at the great white throne has at length overtaken the earth.

But we have seen that there will be some premonitory signs of the approach of that day, interpreted aright by some. The lightning leaps always from the black bank of cloud. The great cloud careering on the wind, and overspreading the heaven, is therefore the warning that the thunder is about to roll and the lightnings to flash forth upon the earth. And will there not be signs, and symptoms, and premonitory warnings, of the approach of that last lightning blaze? On seeing these premonitory signs, some will say, "Your interpretations are ridiculous; the whole thing can be explained on the principles of natural science. To expect that the great black cloud which has risen from the horizon, and overspreads the sky, is charged with divine judgments, and is to burst in scathing lightning upon the earth, is to be fanatical, or superstitious; it is no significant prophetic event; it is only one of the ordinary natural phenomena." When some day men will awaken, and hear that great Babylon has sunk like a millstone in the depths of the ocean, they will say, "It is because Vesuvius and Etna have not burst out as usual; and a new volcanic orifice has taken place." When one day there shall be a rushing crowd of God's ancient people, seeking rights in Europe, and finding them only in Palestine; when Jerusalem shall be recognized by the earth as its capital and the possession of its own beloved, neither forgotten nor forsaken people, whose it is, and whose property it will be; they will say, "What an enlightened liberal policy, which balances conflicting nationalities, and erects in Jerusalem a dynasty that will resist Russia, keep Turkey in order, and prevent other consequences that might have injured the safety and peace of Europe." When the world shall see unexpected phenomena in the sky—signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; thousands of telescopes will be directed upward, and every telescope will bring back the intimation, "Oh, it is a meteoric sign, it is an electric phenomenon, it is

polar light ; it is a mere transient phenomenon ; you must not listen to those silly people who believe that there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon. Science has disposed of the miracles of the Bible, and you must take its decisions as alone infallible." And when again there shall be felt perplexity, nation rising up against nation, kingdom against kingdom—France with Russia against Austria, and Prussia and England in mortal struggle ; India in revolt, and China at war with us ; and commercial convulsions, pestilences, and plagues in divers places, they will say, " It is owing to mismanagement, red-tapeism, the want of the right man in the right place. Drain London ; attend to sanitary matters, and cholera will disappear and disease die out. Have nothing to do with prophecy. Pay no regard to what are predicted in the word of God." It may be so ; but certainly these scientific objectors seem to be the successors, if one would not judge uncharitably, of a class who are a sign of the times, while they say, " Where is the promise of his coming ? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation ; for this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and that a thousand years is with the Lord as one day, and one day as a thousand years. And the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." There is a second class who meet all statements on the subject with " wishes it may not be true"—who may believe that these are symptomatic of some great change, of some looming catastrophe or convulsion coming upon the earth ; and justly alarmed, they will deprecate the day, and refuse to speak or think of it. Many a parent will say, as she looks upon the new-born babe, " Oh, let me only live ten—twenty—thirty years, that I may see my child arrive at manhood before all things are ended !" Many a statesman who has spent years in elaborating a most ingenious system of reform in church and state, will feel so grieved that the age will

close before his experiment has had a fair trial. The merchant, anticipating a cargo from Australia or California with precious gold, that will enrich him for life, will deplore the impossibility of enjoying himself now. And the poet and the painter, thirsting for immortality, will be grieved and sorry that all their bright visions are gone; for there are men who think that this earth was made simply for their use, and specially for their counting-houses to stand on; its ocean meant to bring cargoes to their warehouses; its rivers intended merely to turn their mill-wheels and to grind their corn; and that anything that stops or arrests the contributions of these is most deeply to be deprecated indeed. But there is another class, God's own people, who will not try to explain phenomena significant of the purposes of God on scientific grounds; and who will not deprecate that day. They will say, "This is the answer to our daily prayer, Thy kingdom come; this is the response to the Church's cry, Come, Lord Jesus; we have been looking for him; and to us he comes the second time without sin unto salvation." They will lift up their heads, for to them draweth nigh redemption.

When that day shall come, what shall be the accompaniments of it? Let us not accept fancies, but hear God's word. Let me read from one part, "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Or take Peter's graphic description of it when he says, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Here is no anticipation nor conjecture of man—it is the express and unmistakeable assertion of that Holy Spirit who inspired the Apostles to write these things. At that day when Christ shall come, when the red lightning shall scathe

the earth, and set fire to all that is on it, and in it, and about it, we read in his own word that his own people will be caught up in a cloud far above the reach of a burning world; for he says in 1 Thess. iv., "We which are alive and remain at the coming of the Lord, shall be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." We read in the book of Revelation that God's people thus caught up again descend to a new earth and a new heaven, and on the earth they reign with Christ a thousand years; why then caught up in the cloud? To be beyond the reach but not beyond the sight of that last fire which consumes the earth, and burns up all the things that are upon it. I can conceive what a spectacle of awful grandeur will be presented by a burning earth as seen by the happy and safe spectators, from the cloud of glory that floats their beautiful pavilion far above it. Laplace, the astronomer, says he detected ten or twelve orbs in the sky, that first of all burnt with a yellow flame, mixed with smoke; then kindled to an intense white heat; and ultimately disappeared from their places altogether; so that the telescope has made science acquainted with the phenomenon of a burning, a calcined, and a consumed orb. Now when this world shall be subjected to that last fire, when this lightning flash shall ignite all the elements that wrap it, and all the materials that are in it, and all the things that are upon it, I may, without irreverence, suppose some one, or perhaps many, in the bright cloud in which they have been caught up far above it, to be spectators of the scene; and what will such spectators witness? They will see the crown-jewels of England, the iron crown of Charlemagne, the diadem of the last Napoleon, and the sceptre of the Autocrat of all the Russias, seized by the fierce flames, consumed to ashes, and disappear. I look at another portion of the earth. I see all the cannon of Austerlitz, of Waterloo, of the Crimea, and of Italy; the swords, the bayonets, the fifes, the discordant drums, the tattered colours, the blood-stained banners;

all the weapons from every arsenal on earth ; all the gunpowder from every magazine of the wide world, seized upon by the red flame, and flashing into one terrible blaze ; and the very blaze that consumes all the engines of war revealing legibly in letters that never can be expunged, "The nations shall learn war no more." Look again at that great fire in another division of the world. Therein I see prisons, gaols, gibbets, axes still red even with royal blood ; codes of law, ermine, the paraphernalia of courts of justice, and acts of Parliament, laid hold upon and consumed in the blazing fire ; and amid the ashes that remain I can read the blessed inscription, "There shall be no more sin !" Therefore there will be no more penalty, nor sorrow, nor tears, nor captivity, nor crime, but everlasting deliverance. Look again to another section of that great fire, ye merchants, ye tradesmen, ye commercial men of the wide world, and what do you see ? All the commerce from Threadneedle Street to New York ; all the paper in currency, notes of hand, bills not ripe, and bills overdue ; ledgers, gold, silver, all that you have been grasping, clutching, hoarding up ; over which you have wept, and toiled, and cried ; all of it, not one particle of it exempt, is consumed in the blaze, as if to tell high heaven and witnessing earth what trash is that about which men have quarrelled, and by loving which too dearly souls have been destroyed ; whilst the illuminating flame will reveal, writ upon the sky, "durable riches" that neither thief nor moth can steal or corrupt, "the unsearchable riches of Christ." I look at another portion of that great fire, and see Magna Charta, the foundation of our freedom in it ; acts of parliament, title-deeds of choicest value, patents of nobility that date to the Norman conquest, charters of venerable age and of great importance, all cast into the flame, and utterly consumed, proving as they are consumed, "The world and all the fashion of it passeth speedily away." I look at another part of the world, and I see from that cloud the impartial flame devour St. Peter's in the metropolis of Italy, while cardinals, and bishops, and priests are

saying high mass, with all the pomp and splendour of ecclesiastical circumstance, and the vast cathedral dissolves and disappears like the fabric of a vision, and leaves not a wreck behind. The same flame, fulfilling its mission, seizes on St. Paul's in our own metropolis, and upon the lowliest chapel that stands or sinks under its broad shadow; and vestments, croziers, altars, shrines, images, pictures, monuments, encaustic tiles, and all that men loved, that some almost worshipped, and good taste appreciated, are reduced to ashes in the devouring and the overwhelming fire. I look to another part of the world; I see, what must pain some, the library of our great Museum, the yet more precious library of the Vatican at Rome, reached by the all-devouring and unsparing fire. I see the works of Gibbon, and Voltaire, and Rousseau, and Shelley, and Byron cast into the flame; and as they are consumed they send forth volumes of sulphurous and intolerable smoke. I see the works of Milton, and Shakespeare, and Scott, and the master spirits of every age of our country blazing in the flames, while they shoot up only in brilliant sparks that have all the splendour of the lightning, and all its evanescence too. I see newspapers, monthlies, quarterlies, all cast into the flame, and reduced to tinder. But strange exception! wondrous spectacle! I see one book cast into that devouring, red heap; the flames seem to retreat from it, the red fire seems afraid to touch it. What exceptional book is this? It is the book of God, that has defied flood, and fire, and persecution, and sword, and decay, and now shines with more imperishable lustre in the flame that wraps a world and calcines all besides. And what is the lesson from all this? "Seeing all these things"—crowns, genius, wealth; all that man venerates, all that man has—"seeing all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" And if this be the inference, what ought to be the first anxiety? Is the soul safe? That is the first, the chief, and the last thing. Is it well with thee? is it well with thy soul in the prospect of a judg-

ment-seat, and of that last flame that shall consume the world? To-day is the day of salvation; to-day every soul may be saved. That day, just as you are found, you will be fixed for ever and for ever! If your soul be washed in that Saviour's precious blood, and clad in his perfect righteousness, the lightning flash that spreads from the east to the west will find no conducting medium in you; and amid the fires that calcine the earth, you will be unscathed, as the three Hebrew youths that walked in the midst of the seven-fold heated furnace, and felt it only as if it were paths and beds of roses. Do not set your hearts or affections too much on things that are perfectly lawful in themselves. Men's souls are ruined not so much by indulgence in what is positively sinful as by the excessive love of things in themselves perfectly lawful. Do not embark all your affections upon a transient flower, upon a passing rainbow, upon a fading sunbeam; upon things that now may injure, and that then will be utterly destroyed. Seek to promote things that will survive the last fire. Do not spend your money in building splendid churches, magnificent cathedrals, of fine Gothic architecture, and at great expense; all these things will be consumed like straw huts in the last fire that wraps round a dissolving world. Rather collect living stones; go down to Field Lane, to Brewer's Court; to the depths and subsoil of our debased population; pick out their neglected youths or perishing females; pray for them, instruct them, give your money, which will all be burnt up, in order to secure living stones that shall last for ever; and thus you will build up, not temples that will perish, but living temples, built of living stones on Christ, the living rock, that will endure for ever. Do not build fine churches; get living churches first, and then raise the dead ones to hold them. What we want, seeing all these things must be dissolved, is living churches. And oh! ten thousand times rather living people worshipping in a shed, or in a cold cellar, than dead ministers, dead worshippers, dead people, dead hearts,

under cathedrals whose spires sparkle in rising and in setting suns!

This prospect of a dissolving world is a more practical motive force than the prospect of death. I appeal to you in this matter. Scarcely do we find an instance of an apostle warning and moving by the fear of death. The era I am describing is the apostolic motive power, "I beseech you by the coming of the Lord, and by our gathering together unto him;" "The coming of the Lord draweth near; the judge is at our doors." All these things are constantly set forth in the word of God. But you say, Is not the fear or the prospect of death as fitted to detach our affections from this present world as that prospect of a dissolving earth and an approaching judge? I answer, No; for what do we find men doing now? They are creating a sort of immortality of their own; they are storing up money that they may buy lands, and build houses, and make an estate, and call them by their own names, in order, in the language of the world, to create a family, leave their property behind them, and live along the lines of their successors to many generations. What is inspiring poets, and architects, and painters, and sculptors, ay, and preachers too? The desire of a sort of meagre, mean immortality called posthumous renown; an attempt to create a sort of immortality here; and, in spite of death, to treasure up things that constitute this world's pride, and pomp, and glory. But now when we tell them all these things must be dissolved; that the Judge is at the door; that they must soon appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, we may lead them to lift their thoughts upward instead of sending them forward, and to build for heaven instead of building for their children and their children's children upon earth.

But some one will say (and people mistake and misapprehend everything), If Christ's coming be so near; if a dissolving world be at hand, and no man knows the day nor the hour, though every man, if a Christian,

should study the signs, will not people give up everything? will not some give up their business, or cease to accumulate? I suspect there is very little fear of any one ceasing to accumulate or to toil because of these things. And if any man were to argue, Since it is said that this is the Saturday evening of the world's long week, since these things are almost at our doors, then I will shut my shop; I would tell him, you are contradicting most grossly the command of your great Master, "Occupy till I come." If I were a tradesman, I should just be as happy to be found, when the Saviour comes, dealing justly behind my counter as I should be if found in the pulpit preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. Our duty is always obligatory. "Occupy till I come" is the order and the marching-order of the great Captain of the faith. We are to go on with our duties, even at the moment that we may see the big black cloud charged with the lightning flash; and each is to seek to be found where Providence has placed him, sanctifying by grace the works and the world, if possible, in which he is engaged. Let me give you an instance of what I mean—a practical, common-sense illustration. About sixty years ago, there was in America a universal superstition—not an enlightened belief—that the world was about to close. They believed that the world was about to end, because a total eclipse, or dense darkness, took place at noonday. There was all the darkness and the gloom of midnight. It happened that the legislature of Connecticut was assembled at this hour; half the members of the session believed that that dense night was really the darkness that preceded the ushering in the judgment and another state and world. They were in great alarm, and two or three of the most agitated got up at once, and moved that the council do adjourn. There was, in short, a panic. In the midst of the panic, and while some were proposing an adjournment, an old and venerable Puritan, a colonel, who had learned noble lessons from the Puritans of England, the salt of the country at that time, rose up and said, "Mr. Chairman, we are told that our duties are always imminent, that they are

always obligatory. Some in this house are afraid that the last day is come; it may be they are right; I have some suspicion they are so; but as our duties never cease, instead of moving that the house adjourn, as we cannot see in this darkness to do business, I move that the candles be brought in, and that we proceed to the order of the day." That man spoke like a Christian, and he lived like a Christian. Now may we be found going on with the orders of the day when the light of the last day shall flash upon this world.

LECTURE XIII.

NEARING DELIVERANCE.

According to the most competent, because inspired judge, the future is to be hailed and prayed for, not deprecated by the Christian, as if it unbosomed only calamity.

“For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”—ROMANS xiii. 11.

THE salvation referred to by Paul is unquestionably that large and comprehensive deliverance which is the destiny of all created things, and of all the living rational and responsible beings who have believed in Christ, and are regenerated by his Spirit. Personal salvation is an experience of the present; the salvation alluded to is a fact that lies still in the future. It is not individual safety, but the general salvation of the whole body of the Church, to which Paul refers. It is time to awake, because our salvation, or deliverance, is nearer than when we believed; and the night, which means the whole of this existing economy, is far spent; the day, which means the future, everlasting sunshine, that spreads over all the earth, when Christ takes to him his great power, and sways his sceptre from sea to sea, is near at hand. He speaks of that future deliverance, which he describes in the 8th chapter of Romans, as the manifestation of the sons of God: the redemption of the earth from its groans, its travail, and its expectancy, and that restoration of all things which had been

spoken of by the prophets, and is the distinctive feature of that millennial day which approaches faster and nearer as the centuries roll on. Few can fail to be struck, in reading the epistles of St. Paul, with his constant statement of the nearness and the instancy of the advent of our Lord. He says in one passage, "The Lord is at hand;" in another passage, "Looking for that blessed epiphany, the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, our great God and Saviour." St. James says, "Be patient; the Lord is at hand; the Judge is at the door." Nor can any fair reader of the epistles of St. Paul escape constantly perceiving, not a mere matter of hope, but of fact, that the motive and the hope that he puts before Christians is not the nearness of their death, but the instancy of the approach of their great and blessed hope, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In other words, the governing hope of the Christian is not his own personal deliverance at death, but the coming of his Lord. His hope in a Saviour that is to come is as entire, intense, and joyous as his trust and faith in a Saviour that has come. The attitude of a Christian is resting by retrospective faith on Christ, bearing his curse, his only atonement, and his looking, prospective hope for that same Saviour to come the second time without sin unto salvation. What salvation? Not the personal safety of the believer, which is secured at his own death; but the universal restoration of heaven and earth, of soul and body, which is the bright hope that, like a star in a dark night, shines in the eye of the believer continually. But when the apostle speaks of Christ being at hand, of his being soon to be revealed, you ask, how could this be?—how could the apostle say so without being deceived, when, as matter of history, we know that eighteen centuries have elapsed since Paul spoke of Christ's advent as at hand? The explanation of some is, that it means no more than the Christian's death, as equivalent to Christ's coming. But surely that cannot be. When a Christian dies he goes to Christ, it is not Christ who comes to him. But

the hope of the Christian is not his going to Christ, but Christ's coming to him. And if language has any definite meaning, we are warranted in translating or interpreting Christ's promised advent the second time without sin unto salvation as the Christian's deliverance from this body of death, and his introduction into the presence of his Lord. The Church of Christ—meaning by that misunderstood and abused word the whole company of true Christians, of whatever name or denomination; some in Rome, in spite of it, not created by it; some in the Greek Church, equally in spite of it, and in no sense created by it; and some in every denomination upon earth—I say the Church, then, as the company and congregation of all faithful people, of all true Christians, from the days of St. Paul to the present moment, is constantly regarded in the Bible as a unity, which, from the first believer upon earth to the very last believer upon the shores of eternity, constitute in one group what is called in the book of the Apocalypse the bride; and that bride—which means not a section of the Church geographically, nor a portion of the Church chronologically, but the whole body of faithful Christians—is represented as one person, the bride waiting for the Bridegroom, watching the signs of his approach, listening if she can hear the sound of his chariot-wheels, and rejoicing, and cheered with joy unutterable and full of glory, when the sound echoes in her ears, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh;" and, in the language of our blessed Lord, "she goeth out to meet him." If you will carry with you the idea that Christ's Church is one corporate company of all believers, in spite of space and of time, elements altogether purposely overlooked in the definition, you will then see that the apostles, in writing to the Thessalonians, the Corinthians, and the Romans, wrote to the Church of Christ then existing, now existing, and that will exist to the end; and therefore that this Church is to be constantly in the attitude of hope—on the tiptoe of expectancy—her lamps burning, her loins girt, and

herself ready to meet the Bridegroom, whensoever and wheresoever he shall come. This explains at once the idea which the apostle constantly presses and repeats, the instancy of the advent. It teaches us that we are now to feel what the Christians then felt, and to live under the constant belief that he may be to-morrow, next year, we know not how soon, revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them that know him not, but to be admired and glorified in all them that believe. If this be the expectation of the Church of Christ, is it not natural—and certainly it is not unscriptural—to watch, and study, and gather up the signs and tokens of the nearness, or the possible distance of his approach? At all events, is not such conduct in harmony with that of men in all other things? The day and the hour of his advent are uncertain; the fact of his advent is as certain as rising and as setting suns. If you are anxiously watching the return to your home of some one near and dear to you, how hard you will try to catch a familiar sound amid the wind or the pattering rain, or to see the distant shadow in the moonlight! You feel it your instinctive impulse to seek out any sign of the approach of one who is so intimately associated with you. The watcher on the distant heights looks intently into the east, to catch the first beam of the rising sun; the voyager upon a broad and desert sea looks anxiously and often around if he can see some floating weed or some wheeling sea-bird to indicate the nearing land, or the whitening cliffs of his native shore, or the mountain-range within the horizon that tell him that his home is at hand. The Christian, not exempt from the feelings of all, nor forbidden to cherish them, will often look if he can see any signs of that glorious appearing, gilding with its orient beams the distant east. He will often compare sea, and star, and sky, and latitude, and longitude with the revealed and inspired chart which God has given him; a chart that not only lays down the fact that Christ will come, but has spread over it tokens, marks, and indications, by which you may gather the

high probability that his approach is near. The Christian, like the voyager on a great sea, may often misinterpret; that is possible, for he is human; and in the difficult path of the unfulfilled to err is common. The mariner may take the piece of drift-wood that he finds upon the sea for a fragment too recently torn from the shore, indicating, therefore, his nearness to land, and it may have been long tossed, or it may be something torn by the storm from the depths of the sea. Or he may take some wing-weary bird for a recent emigrant from the land, when really it has lost its way, has been long at sea, and is sinking with fatigue. Or he may mistake that as the first ray of the rising sun, which is only a phosphorescent meteor. But incidental errors will not make him despair; they will only induce him more carefully to watch and wait, certain that the fact itself will be, and that phenomena indicative of its nearness will multiply as it approaches. So the Christian may err—may seize some startling scene as appearing to him the token of its nearness; or he may interpret some voice in the wilderness as the sound of his chariot-wheels; or he may think that the transient blaze of the meteor is the burst of the morning sun; but if he find that he has fallen into error in so interpreting, he will not therefore despair, or give up his investigation. And far better have the character of him who intently looks, and in his intense longing treats that as a sign which is not, than the sceptic and freezing apathy of the man whose heart is dead, and whose hopes are cold, and who cares for and looks for none of these things. The incidental error of a few cannot shake or shatter the trust of the many; and the error that is made by one watcher for the advent will only lead another, like a buoy upon a wreck in the channel, to avoid the reef on which his predecessor may have suffered shipwreck.

If this salvation to which the apostle alludes; to which he also refers in Hebrews, when he says, "Christ will come the second time without sin unto salvation;" was spoken of as nearer in the days in which he wrote

than it was in the days in which he first believed; we may with greater emphasis say, because we have evidences that the apostle then had not, that this salvation is nearer still. It might be said with some semblance of truth in the days of Paul, "All things continue as they were since the beginning;" but it cannot be said with any semblance of truth that all things continue now as they were from the very beginning. Events predicted by Paul to precede that advent have demonstrably occurred; developments of error, the apostacy, and the decadence of that apostacy, and its nearness to its degradation and its destruction, are so palpable now, that being laid down as signs of the nearness of Christ's approach, we can scarcely misinterpret or misunderstand them. During the last ten years event has thundered upon event, and phenomenon trodden upon phenomenon, till the most apathetic, careless, and indifferent, begin to see signs of a supernatural presence, and to read and listen to the explanations of students of prophecy, which they sneered at or despised altogether before. We cannot of course expect that all will see this; because, to the very end, thousands will be found saying as Peter predicted, "Where is the promise of his coming, for all things continue as they were since the beginning?" And if men ask, as indeed they do, "If only ten or twenty years remain before the coming of Christ;" if our chronology be correct, "then," some are saying, "what is predicted in the Bible to take place before that event cannot possibly be completed in that time." But in answer so far to this difficulty, who does not know that events are accomplished now in days that used to require years, and in a year that used to require centuries, and in a century that used to require a millennium? Nobody in 1854 could have anticipated that events would have occurred which have rocked the world with convulsions, and agitated and revolutionised the feelings of Europe during 1855, 1856, and 1859. Nor do succeeding years look less stormy. Who then can say that events, as the time gets nearer, may not be

more crowded and condensed. The wheel is rolling down the mountain side, and the nearer it approaches the valley below, it becomes more rapid in its revolutions. Every one feels now that time runs at greater speed than it used to do; not that it really does so, but that events are now so many, so stirring, and the excitement of them so great, that months seem days, years seem months, and ages are reduced to years.

But let me notice some of those events which lead us to anticipate, even more than the apostolic church could, the increasing nearness of these great changes. Can one fail to see all over Europe startling events? If earthquakes in divers places, if famines, if pestilences, and plagues, were to be among the earliest forerunners of a great change; are not these most conspicuous now? Does not every day's news bring accounts of them? Does not every paper reveal in different parts of the world one or more, or many, of these facts and phenomena. I know quite well the objection. "Why, all these things have always been?" So they have: but our Lord knew that as well as you; and yet he says that these things will be forerunners of his second coming unto salvation to all them that believe: this must mean something. I ventured to show the complete fulfilment of the drying up of the Euphrates. If we can identify one fact in history with a specific symbol in the Apocalypse, and if the identification be so exact, complete, and so truly overlapping it that there can scarcely be a mistake, we not only ascertain the fulfilment of a given prophecy, but we ascertain the point of time we occupy in the great calendar of prophecy. Now one of these events that were to take place under the sixth vial, when the unclean spirits were to gather the nations to that great war—not battle, but war—of Armageddon, was, that the great river Euphrates, the symbol of the Turkish power in Europe, from which the Turks started, and to which, as the reflux of a stream, they are going back again, should be dried up, so that the exhaustion of it, or the waning

of the crescent, or the drying up of the Mahometan power in Europe, would be the fulfilment of it. This I stated many years ago, and within this present year we have seen the unmistakeable fulfilment of it. The correspondent of one of the daily papers, writing the other day, speaking of Turkey, says "Her resources are utterly exhausted." God brings to pass the fulfilment of his own prediction, strangely, indeed, by the very process most justly employed by the western powers to keep up and prevent the evaporation of the great river Euphrates. In the same paper I read, "The admission of the Turkish state into the European system under the counsels and the tutelage of the western powers is now inevitable;" that is, it is no longer to be an independent nationality. Of course it will not be; but I am quoting it simply as a proof of the fulfilment of that statement of the Apocalypse. "The sixth angel poured his vial into the air, and the great river Euphrates was dried up, that the way of the kings from the sunrising," that is, the Jews, "might be prepared." And then what takes place?—and it is for this I quote it. Immediately, during the action of this vial, or before it is completely exhausted—for each vial describes a process, not a fact; the process of the one extending into and interlacing with the process that begins in the succeeding one; during the pouring out of this vial, or just at the exhaustion of that empire, the words will be heard, like a startling sound, "Behold I come as a thief." And the constant prediction in the epistle to the Thessalonians is that Christ shall come as a thief in the night; when the great mass shall be saying, "Peace, peace," he shall come instantly as a thief in the night. Or as he himself describes it, "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west;" in speed, in startling and overpowering splendour; "such will be the coming of the Son of man." If we be actually, I say, at this epoch in prophecy, the great truth that belongs to the day, the great truth that every Christian should feel, and

study, and ponder, is Christ's own saying, "Behold I come as a thief;" just in an hour when you expect not; and at that hour especially when men shall be found most frequently saying, "Peace, peace; all things continue as they were; these prophets are always talking prophecy; there is no meaning or sense in it; it is all nonsense; let us eat, and drink, and be merry; all things continue as they were, and will continue to the end." "Behold, I come as a thief," is Christ's own word. Our duty is, "Blessed is he that watcheth;" not miserable, not wretched, but "happy is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked."

Another great event I have alluded to, which shows our salvation nearer than when we first awoke, or, in other words, that there are tokens of the approach of that great era, is the unequivocal and irresistible evidence of the decadence and the imminent destruction of that huge sacerdotal tyranny under which Europe has groaned, and which has struck its roots so deep into dynasties, and nations, and governments; I mean the Papal or Western Apostacy. Now this predicted event, I may mention, is one of the most important as a token in the whole Bible. The apostle says that an apostacy, headed by a pope, the man of sin, should begin from Christ's first advent; and that it should be utterly destroyed by his second advent. He says first of all, "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth;" that is, through the preaching of the Gospel; and strike down, at a blow, with the brilliancy, the brightness, of his own personal advent. We read in the Apocalypse, that when the seventh vial is poured out, great Babylon comes into remembrance, to give her the judgment-cup, in drinking which her decay is to be precipitated, her consumption to go on, her sufferings to be increased. And then at the end of it an angel is to cry from heaven, "Babylon the great is fallen;" and her judgments are to come upon her in one day, and she is to sink like a millstone in the great waters.

I have quoted the public press, not its opinions, but its recorded facts, which are modern history, as furnishing a striking proof of the fulfilment of prophecy. When I ventured to say, a year ago, that Romanism was dying, in fact expiring; some thought that this was rash, in fact not true; it was merely quiet for a moment. But there does seem to me all the evidences of rapid decay; and that the ascendancy of the Pope of Rome, or his proconsul in Westminster, in this country again, is one of the impossibilities of the day, of which there is no more likelihood than of the ascendancy of Mahomet, or any other head of superstition and fanaticism. The Pope trembles in the Vatican. He has a presentiment of the nearness of his doom. What office in Europe would insure his Pontifical life for five years? Recollect what this power was in ancient days: a power that made kings tremble on their thrones; a power that could force a German emperor to remain doing penance amid the snows in the trenches around the imperial city, till the Pope gave him absolution; a power that could dispose of Britain's crown to whomsoever he pleased; the great power that reigned over the kings of the earth. "How are the mighty now fallen! Is this the man that shook kingdoms, that made the earth to tremble? Is he become as one of us?" And what do recent events indicate? The decadence of the system to the very verge, till like the thief in the night, He comes whose right it is to reign; and the whole is struck down; and that great city is literally swallowed up and destroyed by fire; and the smoke of its torment begins to rise for ever and for ever. I am speaking not of persons, but of the system; and if you know it as I know it, if you knew what an awful wickedness it is, instead of being sorrowful, you hear of her judgments, letting your eyes go out with her, and your tears fall over her. Those sympathies of yours would rush to travel to the Cottian Alps, or to Rome, or to the Inquisition of Spain; to scenes that have been transacted

there, they would come back armed with indignation ; and instead of weeping over the ruin, you should, as angels bid you, rejoice that great Babylon is fallen—is fallen—is fallen. If this be the recorded state of things, it is another token that our salvation is nearer than when we believed. I do not quote more. I quote these two as prominent and striking foretokens ; and the lesson that they all teach is not fear, not alarm, not terror ; but, “ Prepare, O Israel, to meet thy God. Behold the Bridegroom cometh ; go out to meet him.” People say, “ What a dreadful thing ! But is not death in that sense a very dreadful thing ? As far as you are personally concerned, it is all the same whether your soul goes to him, or he comes to you. The real question is, are you justified ? are you regenerated ? are you sanctified ? And if you are, come either, it must be happiness to you. Is it not a very solemn thing, that needs no prophet to predict, that the St. Paul’s bell does not strike twice in the hearing of the same persons ? the persons that hear it strike twelve do not all hear it strike one ; some that hear it strike one will not hear it strike two. In all probability of those that assemble within the walls of the sanctuary on each Sunday, one drops weary with the march of life, and goes to the judgment-seat. And it is not at all improbable, certainly not impossible, that of those that sit in their pews, looking and listening, one Sunday, several shall be in the course of the next week at the judgment-seat of Christ. Is not that equally terrible ? Does not that make you think ? And why then should such objection be made to that better event which is happiness to all God’s people, and only confusion to them that believe not in Christ and obey not the Gospel ? Christians need in these times to be summoned to think and pause, prepare and make ready. We are all too prone to repose at ease, fanned by the gales of worldly prosperity, dreaming of scenes that may never come, and of success that we may never attain ; instead of feeling every moment, we know not what a day may bring forth. And if one can only awaken one single soul to pause, to think, to work

while it is called to-day ; to disentangle the affections from things that perish in the using ; to set them not upon things that are beneath, but upon things that are above ; to use the world as not abusing it, knowing that the fashion of it passeth away ; it will not be in vain that I have called attention to this most important, too much neglected, too frequently forgotten subject. We must, on all these great questions, inquire not what the Rabbis say, but try to ascertain what God has revealed in his holy word. Let me ask, if that lightning were to stretch from the east to the west ; if the warning voice, " Behold, I come as a thief," told to-day, were to-morrow to be a reality ; if the shout were to be heard going from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth, " Behold, the Bridegroom cometh ;" are we ready ? are our lamps burning ? are our loins girt ?—Can we say, " I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day ?" Have I settled the great question of personal acceptance before God through Christ Jesus ? If not, we dream upon the edge of a tremendous precipice ; we sleep on the margin of the sea on which the flowing tide is rolling inwards with irresistible force. We stand, and eat, and drink, and walk in jeopardy every hour. But if we have accepted the only Saviour ; if we have committed soul, body, and spirit, to his keeping ; if our ground of trust is, that he was made sin for us, and our conviction be that we are made righteousness by him ; if we be justified by faith in his blood, and regenerated by his Holy Spirit ; then, whether we are called to the judgment-seat, or Christ comes to us ; whether we are taken to him, or he comes to us ; it will be equally well, for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. And when we look at scenes in the East and West, thickening, multiplying, ominous of yet future ones, more dreadful and disastrous—we can learn this lesson at least, that that man has no humanity, no philanthropy, and certainly no Christianity, who does not long for that long promised day when earth shall be restored from its thralldom,

when the groans of creation shall cease, when all things shall be made new, when Paradise shall return ; and Christ the Head shall reign over a happy, a holy, and a peaceful world ; and God shall have glory, and we shall praise him day and night, as the monuments of his love, and the purchase of a Saviour's blood, and without ceasing.

Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

LECTURE XIV.

THE DAY AND HOUR.

Many have speculated where they ought to have paused. Dates in the future are not so clear as dates in the past. We cannot read prophecy as we read history : sunshine sleeps on the one ; the mists of evening hang on the other.

“ Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”—MATTHEW xxiv. 36, 37.

HERE we are distinctly informed that the exact chronological day and hour of the advent of our blessed Lord is known to none ; but we are also told that there are certain premonitory and significant signs that are meant to be to us evidence of its nearness ; and that to these, and not to the day and the hour imagined, calculated, or supposed, we are constantly to attend. Let me first of all notice the practical importance of concealing the day and hour when the Son of man shall come from the knowledge of the Church and of all mankind. Were the day and the hour of the Saviour's advent specifically and unmistakeably stated, it would contradict constantly those passages scattered throughout the whole word of God which say he shall come as a thief in the night ; and that he will appear at the very time when men, so far from expecting the day and the hour, will be congratulating each other on the impossibility of his advent ; saying, “ Where is the promise of his coming ? for all things continue as they were from the begin-

ning until now." If some portion of Scripture says he will come as the lightning bursts from the cloud, and flashes from the east unto the distant west—that he will come with the unexpectedness of a thief that breaks into premises to plunder and to steal; such assertions are utterly incompatible with our knowing the exact day and hour when the Son of man shall come. Were the day and the hour specified by Matthew, but not specified, or rather declared unknown, in the epistle to the Thessalonians, there would be what there is not and cannot be—a contradiction between one portion of the word of God and another. But the very reference employed immediately after—namely, to the days of Noah—shows that while there is no specification of the day or the hour, there will be certain signs, phenomena, and historic visible occurrences, whose approach will be to us pre-significant warnings that the hour and the day at least draweth nigh. For instance, no physician upon earth can specify the day or the hour of a dying man's death; he will tell you he may live weeks or months, yet the disease is in him that must terminate very shortly in death. That physician does know whether the day of his death be comparatively near or comparatively remote by his pulse, by certain signs and symptoms—by his sufferings, by the ascertained nature of the disease, so much so that he will be able with remarkable accuracy to predict that he cannot live beyond so many days or so many weeks. We may be unable, and are positively unable, chronologically to specify the day and the hour when this dispensation shall end; but we may feel Nature's faltering, hesitating pulse—we may count the wrinkles that gather on her venerable brow, as if to crowd her history into little space—we may detect symptoms of exhaustion in all things that are above, and around, and below; and thus we may be able, with God's inspired chart in our hands, and with the promise of God's Spirit to explain its mystery and its meaning, to say that if the world is to last, as the old Jewish rabbis believed it, a week of seven thousand years, we may calculate approximately whether

this be about the Friday, or the Saturday, or the Saturday evening of the world's long week, and thus form a probable estimate of the epoch we live in, of the events that are before us, and of the probable remoteness or nearness of that day when the lightning shall flash from the cloud, and the earth and the things that are therein shall be burned up, and we shall not be destroyed, but transferred to a balmier clime, to a lovelier rest and more beautiful repose, till the earth is made ready; being where Christ is, and where he is there is happiness and everlasting heaven.

After the day of Pentecost the Apostles received information upon this subject which they did not previously possess. No one can read the Gospels without seeing that the Apostles, to the very day that Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, were excessively ignorant of many things, and entertained all kinds of misapprehensions of the truth; so much so that the comparison between Peter before the day of Pentecost and Peter after the day of Pentecost is a comparison between the glow-worm or taper and the brilliancy of a star. If this be so in that specific case, we may be sure it was no less true in all. Hence we read in the Acts of the Apostles that when Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives, and when the disciples asked, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?" he said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons"—that is, the hour and the day—"which the Father hath put in his own power." But mark what follows: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you

into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go." The Apostle Paul, speaking to his Thessalonian converts, says, "Of the times and the seasons"—that is, the hour and the day—"ye have no need that I write unto you; for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night; for when they shall say, Peace and safety, sudden destruction shall come upon them. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness; that that day should overtake you as a thief;" as if some clear intimation were given to the apostles subsequent to the Day of Pentecost, which enabled them to form and communicate some idea of nearness to or remoteness from the coming of our Lord. When sailing on the ocean, we come to large pieces of driftwood, we instantly suppose we must be approaching some land—or when we discover quantities of floating weeds, as Columbus did on the very point of despair of finding the great western continent—we take heart and say, "The continent of glory is near, for we see the drift detached from the shore, which must indicate we are approaching land." As the men that watch upon the mountain crags catch the first beams of the rising sun before he comes above the horizon, whilst the people in the glens and valleys below are involved in complete darkness, so the students of the signs of the times, diligently comparing what history records with what the Apocalypse predicts, may form a proximate estimate whether they are distant from or near to that great continent of glory to which earth, this broken-off island, shall be united, in order that heaven and earth may be one again and for ever.

It would be altogether morally without practical good results, and incompatible with other portions of Scripture, if God were to tell us the precise day and the hour. What would be the practical use of telling us either? None would be so wretched as the man who should be told that next year, or ten years hence, and on a certain day, and in a certain month, he shall die. But you may depend upon it that as this book contributes all that is really contributory to our happiness,

and if that information had been an element of it, it would have specified that also. But it leaves the day of death undefined, that we may be always ready to obey when the summons comes : in the same manner it leaves the day and the hour of our Lord's advent indefinite, that we may not be in a hurry to make preparation a few days before ; but that we may always hear and everywhere act upon the cry that sounds from heaven, " Watch, be ye ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Were that day made known to us, it would be gratifying a very worthless curiosity. But if there be one feature in this book more striking than another, it is its utter refusal to gratify the curiosity of man. To the least or the deepest want of the humblest believer it ministers infinite fulness ; but to the most anxious and curious inquiry of the most inquisitive mind it answers literally nothing. The silence of Scripture is often its most eloquent credential. I know not from which to infer most the inspiration of the writers—the pure and transparent eloquence with which they speak on all that is essential, or the deep unbroken silence that they maintain on all that merely gratifies an itching and a curious inquiry. Suppose that this day and hour had been made known, there is no proof that it would be believed by the unconverted masses of mankind. If the masses refuse to believe the Gospel, surely they would never be persuaded to believe that at a certain day and hour Christ would come like the lightning, and finish this dispensation. If the unconverted and unsanctified multitude believed it, it would do incalculable mischief. We all know that in the days of Noah, when he told them, on the authority of the living God, that in a hundred and twenty years the whole population would be swept away, they laughed at him, not one believed it. And if we were to tell the multitude now, proclaim it in every newspaper, proclaim it from every pulpit that on a certain day and in a certain year Christ would come, not one would believe it ; and if any did believe it, what would be the effect on them ? What the effect was in Jerusalem, when the

people were warned that the ploughshare of Titus would soon overturn their ancient and magnificent temple, they indulged in all sorts of intoxication, excess, and crime. I have read somewhere that when a shipwreck is inevitable, a godless crew will at once lay hold upon the stores; and so infatuated do men become in the prospect of certain destruction that some will load themselves with gold and silver; others will get drunk; and most of them, instead of being solemnized and impressed by the certainty of a watery grave, will become maddened and furious, and lose their very senses in the terrible prospect of the crisis. It is therefore on all these grounds well and expedient that we do not know the day or the hour. But, on the other hand, it is most profitable and most improving that we should study the predicted signs; nay, our Lord condemned the men of his day, because, while they could predict wet weather and fine weather, from the sky at evening and at morn, they were not acquainted with the moral signs of the age in which they lived. The Scripture in every page is most explicit in giving us tokens and signs by which we are to infer either that the time is near, or that it is remote. This leads me to the great sign given here, instead of the day and the hour—the sign of Noah. Our Lord says that “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of man be”—in those days before the flood they were “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away. So shall it be at the coming of the Son of man.”

Before I illustrate this more fully, let me notice that there is here a distinct recognition of Noah as a historic person, and of the flood as a literal fact. Most have heard that certain German philosophers, who try to be wise, not only above what is written, but against what is written, maintain that the whole of Genesis is a myth. But our blessed Lord here refers to a historic fact in the past to illustrate a real historic event that is approaching from the future; and the very reference that he makes proves that he regarded Noah as a real

person, the deluge as a real fact, and used them as the solid background from which to throw up in more brilliant relief the features of a great approaching era. I cannot but notice also in referring to this fact, that the impression produced upon one's mind on reading the account of the deluge, or our Lord's allusion to it, is that this deluge was universal. Certain geologists, men of great talent, power, and research, and many of them pious men, hold the notion that the deluge was local, that it merely swept over a certain portion of the continent of Asia, where the cradle or birthplace of the human family was ; and that all the rest of the world was left untouched. I do not enter upon the evidence or disproof of this, but this I do say, that on the face of the narrative in Genesis, on the Apostle Paul's allusion to it in Hebrews, and in our Lord's allusion to it here, the inference seems to me rational and just, that the flood was universal ; that the whole of our planet was submerged, and that it covered all the earth, and rose above the tops of the highest mountains, even the mount of Ararat, which is some eight thousand feet, if I mistake not, above the level of the sea, and it must, therefore, have overflowed all the population of the globe. We learn another lesson from this reference—history is never obsolete. Past history is very much the reflection of the future, and present and future history is very much the repetition of the past. A great statesman and gifted orator, still alive, though arrived at a great age, said one day in scorn, when replying to the statement of an opponent, "History ! what is history ? It is simply an old almanack." He meant it in scorn, but there is great force in what he said ; it is an old almanack. What is the difference in successive almanacks ? The tides are the same, the rising and the setting suns are the same, the characters are substantially the same. Wherein lies the real difference ? Simply in the date. The old almanack of the year 1800 is not very much different from the new almanack of 1860 ; man is still upon the same stage, repeating substantially the same acts, using the same expressions, falling into the same sins,

indulging the same reveries, cherishing the same hopes. Human nature repeats itself, history moves in circles, and all the future is very much the reflection of the past.

I cannot but notice here also this interesting fact—that human nature is substantially the same in the days of Napoleon and of Queen Victoria, that it was in the days of Noah and the patriarchs before the flood. There is no real or great revolution in the heart of man. We may be more civilised; we may travel at a greater speed, and enjoy much greater and more numerous luxuries; we may have made greater progress in acquaintance with the secrets of nature; but substantially human nature now is what it was then; the primeval granite crops up still, the changes are on the surface, and those changes of no material value or depth.

The antediluvians, or those that were in the days of Noah, when the flood came, were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. This is not stated as a sin; there is no sin in eating, but in eating to excess; there is no sin in drinking, it is only in drinking to excess; there is no sin in marrying, on the contrary, but obedience to a command; there is no sin in giving in marriage. Then where lay the sin? In this: these things were their all; they did not look above them; their whole hearts, and sympathies, and hopes, were confined to this present scene, and beyond the interests of the present they had no stirring and joyous hope for the future.

In the Gospel, where our Lord represents the blessings that he purchased under a feast, those that were invited refused; but the ground they assigned was not any one sinful act. One said, "I have bought oxen," that was quite right, "and I go to prove them;" that was right. Another said, "I have purchased a field, and I go to measure it;" and another said, "I have married a wife, and I cannot come." There was no sin in buying oxen, or in buying a field, or in marrying a wife; but the sin lay in being so absorbed about these things that no nook was left in the heart, and no day

set apart in the year, for loftier, holier, and more important things. Often we sin by the excessive love of what is lawful more than in the guilty practice of what is positively forbidden. Where then was the sin of the antediluvians? They married, they gave in marriage, they ate, they drank, they enjoyed themselves; but "they knew not till the flood came." Why did they not know? Noah warned them, entreated them to come into the ark; told them they would be destroyed unless they came; but still it came upon them one vast and unexpected catastrophe, which they never anticipated or believed, simply because they were given up to an evil heart of unbelief that would not accept any testimony of God, any one fact in the past, or any one possible, or contingent, or predicted phenomenon in the future. When Noah began to build his ark, in which he was engaged one hundred and twenty years; and when he stood at its door and told the people ere it was finished, that in that ark alone there was safety from the approaching flood; and that unless they came into the ark, in which there would be found room for all that would, they would be overwhelmed in a desolating ocean that would cover the very highest, and not spare the very humblest,—I have no doubt they laughed outright in his face; and that one would say to another over his wine, and after they had been eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage, Have you heard what that old fanatic Noah begins to talk about? The old man is so sunk in dotage that he actually says this world is coming to an end; that there will be no more eating, no more drinking, no more marrying and giving in marriage. Well, if the old fanatic be right, let us eat and drink; there will soon be an end to it. But as to the possibility of the world coming to an end, the thing is so improbable, so impossible, that we cannot believe it." And I have not the least doubt that others said, "Why, look at Noah, he seems as busy as if the world were to last for ever; and he seems to be laying up for his children, Ham, Shem, and Japheth, as if it could have no end; and we do not

think he really believes his own doctrine." The scientific men of that day, I have no doubt, said there is not so much water in the basin of the ocean as would cover the whole earth; and secondly, unless the earth should change the angle of its axis towards the sun, or should revolve with some extraordinary speed it, would be utterly impossible that water should rise high enough to drown the whole world. I have no doubt that others said, Suppose there is to be a flood, I would not trust a dog in that ark which Noah is building. It is one of the most blundering pieces of naval architecture I ever saw. My yacht would carry me through the heaviest sea and under the pressure of a hurricane; and while Noah and his miserable craft would founder, my fine ship would bring me safely through, and land me on some place better than Noah's Ararat. Such, probably, were some of the calculations and conversations of many who would not believe that a flood was approaching; or if they determined that it was within the realm of possibility, they would not believe that the crazy craft that the old man was building could ever stand the sea for six hours. Noah, too, must have met with many difficulties. The apostle says, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it was by faith that he built an ark to the saving of his soul. Noah, probably, when told to build the ark and prepare for the flood, said, Lord, I believe that thy word is truth; I believe in the approaching terrible catastrophe. But, Lord, thou biddest me build an ark; I am no ship architect, I never built a ship in my life. And even if I should succeed in building a ship, and setting her afloat, I have no compass, I have not a stitch of canvas to stretch to the wind; I never in my life touched the tiller of a rudder or helm of any sort or shape, I can neither hoist nor reef sails. And besides, if I were to take two of each of the animals in this ark, how could I keep order in such a menagerie? The larger animals would devour the lesser, and I should not be surprised if they were to fall upon me, and devour me and my family; and therefore the thing

seems to me so impossible that I would rather not attempt it. But the answer is, Noah cared not for the impossibility that stared him in the face; God said, "Do it;" and by faith, believing that He that gave the command was competent to give the skill, the strength, and the genius to execute it, in the language of the apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews, he built an ark to the saving of his own soul, and of all them that were his. But the rest of the world, as we have seen, believed not. And at last, when the windows of heaven were opened, and poured down their roaring cataracts; and when the great ocean, as if agitated by some subterranean earthquake, threw up its waters in their fury to the very tops of some of the mountains; and when one antediluvian, who laughed at the fanatic for his prophecy, began to feel that the fanatic was right, and that the prophet of one hundred years ago was now the witness to the truth in the hour in which he lived; and when one rushed to his yacht, and another to his great ship, and another to his boat, and found them sink like shells in the rushing and remorseless surges; and when others fled to the hills, and found the water creep up like advancing tides with irresistible force, and bury and overwhelm all; and when palatial residences crumbled away like clay in the waters, and castles that had defied all foes, and weathered all storms, and stood every siege, and laughed at every assailant, were swept away like sand-ridges before the advancing sea; and when one cried to Noah, "Come towards us; land on this side; come near to us, and save and deliver us; only take us in, we will give you any money; we will give you all our estates if you will only take us and ours in,"—the despised prophet of yesterday became the idol of to-day. Noah felt that he had no helm to direct his course, no canvas to stretch, and that he was dependent for every inch of his course upon that mysterious and unseen but not unknown Power that gave him the commission to build the ark; and he was constrained to tell many a one, swimming in his agony, and many others, signalling him from every height which the waves had

not yet reached, only to come and take them in—"I warned you of the approaching judgment; I told you on the authority of the living God; you despised my testimony, you have defied the word and the judgments of heaven; the harvest is past, the summer is ended, your sun is set, grace is merged in judgment; there is no hope for you, and no help in me."

"So shall it be when the Son of man cometh."

This is not a mere history; but also a solemn prophecy. Thousands will be just as incredulous when the lightning strikes, and preternatural signs are portrayed in the sky; when the earth begins to groan, and crack, and heave as if with yearning expectancy of deliverance; when all things indicate that this great drama is to be wound up; the world will be as incredulous as ever; and like the five foolish virgins, they will ask oil for their lamps when it is too late to buy it, and they have none to spare; and theirs must be the blackness of darkness for ever.

Just as the ark was the only safety in the days of Noah, so the only safety for us this very day is Christ, the living, the glorious, the indestructible ark. There is none other name, however magnificent, or brilliant from its historic associations, in which or by which we can be saved from the coming judgments of heaven, except the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. His precious blood alone can cleanse us from all our sins; his glorious righteousness will so shelter and so cover us at that dread day, that the fires that consume the round globe will reverently abstain from touching us; and as the three Hebrew youths walked the burning floor of the sevenfold-heated fiery furnace, and had not even the hair of their heads, or the wool of their garments singed; so that happy man who believes in the Saviour, rests upon his precious sacrifice, pleads at that day the password of his name, will feel fulfilled in his happy experience the promise of the prophet, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou

shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee." Are you trusting to this ark? are you cleaving to this Saviour? Now there is salvation for the worst and the guiltiest; but at that day, when grace shall depart like a vision, when the last fire shall cover the round globe with its piercing and its searching flames, not one cry will be heard, not one appeal for mercy will be regarded, not one sin will be forgiven. The very glory of the Gospel is its simplicity: "Look and live;" "Believe and thou shalt be saved." When Noah asked the people to come into the ark, they had simply to believe the word he preached, that the ark was suitable for its purpose, enter into it, and make the experiment. What would have been the use of their saying, Are its timbers strong enough? is the planking thick enough? is the caulking good? is there tar enough to keep out the water? will she break her back upon the waves? Noah's answer was, God says there is safety here; God says there is no safety elsewhere; do not believe appearances; mind only what God says. What he says to us this day is, Christ is the deliverer. You ask, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? How is it possible that one that died eighteen hundred years ago can do me any good? Will not my own upright life be a nobler plea than that Jesus died for sinners? I answer, Whatever appearances may be; whatever your reasoning may prompt; believe God's testimony concerning his Son. That testimony is clear, absolute, without any modification: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life: he that believeth not shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth upon him."

Have you, dear readers, fled to this ark? Are you in the happy group who met in the ark of old, and meet and are meeting to-day in a better ark still? For that ark of Noah carried its inmates across the surging waves, landed them upon the barren heights of Ararat, thence to go forth upon a world dismantled and depopulated; renewing their pilgrimage of tears, and

struggles, and toils, and sickness, and death. But this glorious ark, built in heaven, having capacities for all, and a welcome for all, will carry you to the sunny hills of the new Jerusalem, there to be where neither death, nor sorrow, nor sickness is; but where all is unclouded, eternal, and happy noon.

LECTURE XV.

THE WORLD'S FLEETING FASHION.

Paul's estimate of the duration and nature, and excellence of this present life, is briefly and justly expressed in these words:—

“For the fashion of this world passeth away.”
1 CORINTHIANS vii. 31.

“THE fashion of this world passeth away,” is, strictly speaking, an inference, or rather the ground on which the Apostle constructs the truly practical prescription in the previous passage. “This I say, brethren, the time is short.” What duty does he infer? That you should run from the world, and become an ascetic? No. That you should not, therefore, feel the least interest in the world, and become a Stoic? No. That you should plunge into all the dissipation and folly of the world, and become the Epicurean? No. But what is replete with good sense, “The time is short: therefore it remains, that they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use the world, as not abusing it.” Why? “For the fashion of it passeth away.” It is lawful to weep, or to rejoice; it is lawful to buy, and to possess; it is only sinful to be so absorbed in the blessings God has given you, that your heart becomes glued to them, and cannot lift its affections, or unfold its wings, or rise where it can have true communion in the presence of God and of the Lamb.

The language, which the Apostle uses to describe the ground of this reasoning, is borrowed from the usages

of the playhouse or the theatre in ancient times. The literal translation of the word rendered "fashion," is the shifting of the scenes in the playhouse, as one scenic representation succeeds another in rapid succession. The Apostle having witnessed this in the ancient theatre, applies it, for he draws illustrations of his doctrine from all sources, to this present world, and says, "the fashion of this world passeth away." The great master of dramatists, that most of us, as readers of the English tongue, must have read, says—

"All the world's a stage,
The men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances."

The phrases of the great dramatist are borrowed from, and built on the language of the inspired Apostle, "the fashion of this world passeth away;" literally, "the shifting scenes of this vast panorama, this great theatre, commonly called the world, follow in rapid succession, the more brilliant extinguishing the less so, another now dimming by its splendour one that was yesterday, what entrances to-day ceasing to delight to-morrow; the whole world is a stage; the whole world is a theatre; the earth is but its stage; and all you see above, around, before you, are but the successive dramatic exhibitions of a grand spectacle, which is going with us, and with all that live to the judgment-seat of God, or to the last ordeal, when the earth shall burn, and the elements melt with fervent heat; and the theatre in which each has played his part more or less perfectly shall be lost in that place where there are no masks, no disguises, nothing to conceal the naked heart from the omniscient and penetrating eye of Almighty God."

It needs very little proof to convince us that "the fashion of the world passeth away." In every man's library, however limited; in every man's memory, however young; on every face over which have swept the lights and shadows of half a century; on every head on which sixty or seventy years have shed down their whitening snows; in every failing memory, and failing affection; in our loves or hates, in our sympathies, our

joys, our sorrows, on all within, and on all without, he must be blind who cannot see, and deaf who cannot hear the ceaseless lesson, "the fashion of this world passeth away." We all feel, every day of our life, the future is ceaselessly rushing into the present; the present ceaselessly rushing into the past; till the whole past becomes the gigantic storehouse in which are treasured up youth and beauty, age and talent, riches and poverty; which no eloquence can recall, and no force can pluck back, from the bosom of the unrelenting past. Into its abyss all things seem ceaselessly to rush, like rivers to the sea; to be forgotten of us, but not forgotten of God.

But whilst we turn from the past, which is the storehouse of so much that is precious and beautiful; and whilst we cherish the thought, that only the fashion of the world is passing, that the good, the true, the great in the world, endures for ever; I proceed to illustrate the sentiment by showing that the world, in the various aspects, features, and manifestations, in which we see it, is constantly like a flood that rushes to the ocean, passing away. The world physical, the fashion of the world physical, is passing away. The mountains are rent by the lightning, or disintegrated by the frost; and scarcely one lifts its brow to the skies shaped as it was a few centuries ago. The rocks are transmuted into palaces, and these again are reduced into dust. Seas and shores, waves and sands, are constantly changing places; fountains, and springs, and rivers, are drying up, and the sands of the desert are daily engulfing the majestic monuments of the mighty Pharaohs. The surface of the earth is vastly altered from the days of Noah to those of Napoleon. Deserts lie where gardens once bloomed; and gardens bloom where deserts once spread their gigantic sand-wastes. Were an old monk to rise from beneath the flagstones of some mediæval cathedral, and were he placed in the midst of this great city, and made acquainted with all that is going on on the surface of this little patch of the earth that we call Great Britain, he would suppose that he had been translated into another orb, and had come in contact with a new, a

strange, and an unexplained world. The fashion of the world physical passeth away.

The fashion of the world material, as far as man has altered it, is also passing away. Babylon, once the lady of the kingdoms, diademed and throned, the mistress of the ancient world, is now reduced to a mound of molten bricks, dissolving in the rains, or plundered by the inhabitants around it. Persia is but the shadow of what it was when its legions shook the world. Tyre is now a rock, on which a few poor fishermen bleach their nets. Jerusalem, once the joy of the whole earth, is disrowned and dethroned; and her inhabitants are exiles—a nation without a land to live in, families without a home; a people that have no rule, no laws; and yet preserved, till they return again to Palestine. Athens is the merest shadow of what that proud capital was in the days of Pericles. Rome retains but its name; and it shows the force of a name when that miserable place, sinking if not sunk, so awes the nations by its very word. Thebes, and Palmyra, have all disappeared; and gorgeous Nineveh lies in the grave from which a Layard digs it up stone by stone, and fragment by fragment. A mysterious curse, created by sin, not part and parcel of the original creation, wastes down and wears out all the workmanship of man's hands; and time rushes along a resistless stream; and floating down its bosom, like driftwood, are palaces and hovels; are sceptres, and scythes, and crowns; and every voice that we hear, and every scene that we witness, only authentic and impress the solemn aphorism, "The fashion of this world passeth away."

The fashion of the world social also passes away. What family is there that cannot attest it; what parish, what village, what city in the empire, that cannot speak of the ebb and flow, and the mutation of the things that are about it? To-day a home rings with the music of glad voices; to-morrow it is hung with the drapery of sadness. To-day a bride is given to a rejoicing husband; to-morrow orphans are desolate and widows weep. To-day a babe is born; to-morrow a

grey-haired patriarch, the support and pillar of the house, is carried to his grave. Year after year as we go along we perceive companions, friends, relatives, brethren, weary with the march of life, drop down and disappear. The house that knows us to-day will soon know us no more; the houses that knew many yesterday know them no more for ever. New ties are formed; old ties are dissolved; and the life of the most illustrious noble in the land is but as the vapour that appeareth for a little time, gilded for an hour by the golden beams of the setting sun; but like the vapour that is the symbol of the lowliest life, to be dissolved and to disappear, and to attest what all see, "The fashion of the world passeth away."

The fashion of the world political also passeth away. Theories that were once thought essential to the very existence of the nation are abjured or exploded; parties that held the reins and ruled the fierce democracy have passed away, and their names are almost forgotten. Statesmen revered yesterday as destiny, whose word echoed against thrones, and whose nod awed the multitudes that looked up to them, are derided, despised, and undervalued. Institutions once thought fixed as the everlasting hills are tottering to their ruin. Nor is the future of the political state bright. What a seething chaos is the wide world at this moment; what ominous shadows; what tokens of approaching disaster; some, like birds of ill omen, begin to emerge from every point of the horizon, and to darken with their outspread wings the European sky. What a testimony comes from parliament and palace, from counting-house and sanctuary, from homes, and families, and nations, to this simple, short, but pregnant sentiment, "The fashion of this world passeth away."

All around us bears witness to the fact that the fashion of it passeth away. On a random spark depends the existence of the noblest edifice in the realm! Whether the charred and blackened walls of Covent Garden Theatre were witnesses of great sins, I do not discuss; nor can I pronounce that the proprietors and the per-

formers were sinners above all men. But we may gather from its ashes the lesson that none of us may have gathered from its glory; we may learn on its grave what we could not learn from its meridian pride; and there, the spectator may see an impressive illustration of the words, "The fashion of this world passeth away." What wealth was laid out in its decorations! what artistic genius in covering it with all the pomp and splendour of the age! Literally and truly we could apply the words of the seer when he said, "And now the voice of harpers and musicians, and of pipers and trumpets, shall be heard no more in thee at all; and the light of a candle shall shine no more in thee at all; and the voice of the bridegroom and the bride shall be heard no more in thee at all." The scene of the burning theatre, described a year or two ago in the usual channels of information, was most illustrative of the fashion of the world passing away. If ever it was true, it was emphatically true there, that the flames seem to have conspired together, and seized simultaneously upon all that was fair, beautiful, and attractive; and literally comedy passed into tragedy, without an interlude between; and men who laughed, and mocked, and derided all solemn thoughts, felt themselves in an instant upon the very verge of the grave and eternity. The sleeper started from his sleep, scarcely persuaded to flee; and the maskers rushed from their revelry, their dancing literally turned into mourning. Why do I refer to a theatre on fire? It was a rehearsal on a very microscopic scale of that last and solemn drama described in solemn terms by inspiration itself. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and all the things that are on it shall be burned up. Nevertheless, we according to His promise look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Or, as Paul expresses it, "To you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His

mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." I fear in that last day, of which all the conflagrations that have ever occurred are the dim and poor types, many a sleeper will be found then, crying up to the last moment, "Peace, peace; all things continue as they were from the beginning;" forgetting that the day of the Lord will come, and in an instant the heavens and the earth shall be on fire. But blessed thought, that we can cherish even in that dread prospect, "Whosoever," even at the eleventh hour, "shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." And at that day, too, when this world's fashion shall pass away, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, all the things that are therein shall be burned up, all those masks, for such they really are, which we call crowns, and coronets, and mitres, and wealth, and riches, and imperial circumstance, shall all be consumed. All those disguises which make wicked men look like godly men, and sinners seem saints, shall be torn off. And what a cry and how piercing, will that be which will rise from the ruins of a burning world; when men learn for the first time that they, while they lived, saved a thousand things, but forgot to seek to save their immortal souls, now lost, irrecoverably lost, for ever and for ever lost.

What new fabric has risen upon the ashes of that which has been consumed, we now know; and we know that on the ashes of this burned earth shall rise an orb far more beautiful, far more glorious, which shall endure for ever. The bright mirror that was shattered in Paradise shall be recast—the glorious temple that was unroofed by sin shall be restored; and on its altar shall be rekindled more than its ancient glory. All space will then be holy; all days will then be Sabbaths; all faces gladness; all sounds praise; and its every hill shall be a joyous Gerizzim, a mount of blessing; from which streams of benedictions shall pour down upon a happy and a holy world. Sin shall flee away like a shadow; sorrow's springs and deep foun-

ains shall be dried up; the curse shall be cancelled; the incubus under which the world now groans removed; error shall be torn up by the roots; and this stray and prodigal world of ours, restored to the sisterhood of stars that never fell, shall awaken in the wide universe a congratulation such as was never heard on earth; for the orbs and morning stars shall sing together then as they never sang at creation's birth; "Let us rejoice and be merry; for this our sister earth was lost, and is found; was dead, and is alive; it is meet that we should rejoice and be merry."

But whilst we look at the fashion of this world passing away, there are some things that remain far more important to us than the recollections of the things that have passed away. The fashion of the world passeth away, but God's word abideth for ever. His book remains; no flames can consume it, no winds quench its bright light; no opposition subvert its influence, arrest its march, or destroy its divine authority; it remains like the throne of Him who inspired it; a directory to the ignorant, a pharmacopeia to the sick, a tree of life in the midst of the earth, whose fruit is for food, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. The fashion of this world passeth away, but your soul and my soul remain. Each had a beginning; neither can ever know an end. What a magnificent being is he who knows that before him there stretches out an endless, inexhaustible eternity. When the body is gathered to the grave, the soul, disentangled of all its bands and bonds and imprisonment, shall rise and appear just as it is at the judgment-seat of Christ. But what a solemn thought it is that this soul has capacity for endless woe, as well as capacity for endless joy. The soul as it now exists, is dead in sin, lost, ruined, guilty. You have nothing to do to destroy yourselves but be still; you have something to believe, to accept, to apply for, to lay hold of, in order to be saved,—Christ Jesus, and him crucified. Have you ever entertained this question? have you ever soberly reflected on it? "What shall it profit a man if he gain all the glories, all the

honours, all the riches of the world, and lose his own soul?" Have you ever reflected upon your own state in the sight of God? In other words, have you regarded Christianity as truth, as addressed to you? have you felt the responsibility involved by hearing the Gospel preached? Have you ever passed from the evanescent to that which is indeed eternal; and felt, that there is nothing in this world of such moment to you, as that immortal, precious soul which was wrecked in Paradise, and was retrieved only by the cross and through the blood of Christ Jesus?

If the fashion of this world passeth away, blessed thought! the Saviour still remains. He offers you to-day pardon for the greatest sin, peace to the greatest sinner. Salvation is not going to a church or a chapel, or a service; or joining a denomination, or giving something, or doing something; that is man's way, or the priest's way: God's way is all heaven gratis to that poor guilty one who will only honour God by accepting it. God is too rich to sell it, and we are too poor to buy it. What a grand truth is that!—the price of heaven is a Saviour's blood; and there is no monopoly of it; no exclusion of the worst; there is no debarring of the oldest; to each and to all I can proclaim this day, and if, instead of being surrounded, as this church lately was, by the ashes of a burning play-house, we were surrounded by the flames of a dissolving world, I can say to you all and to each apart, "Believe thou in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And in doing so, I only echo the words of Him whom I preach, when He says, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and beside me there is no Saviour."

If the fashion of the world passeth away, our opportunities and means of grace still remain. We know not what home is next to blaze, or what estate is next to perish; and if the home be preserved from the fire, and the estate be rescued from the

Amalekites, still the inhabitant may be taken from the home, and the proprietor may be snatched from his estate: and whose shall these things be, is a question of no trivial importance; but what shall my soul be? is a question of intenser moment still. But now, this very day, there is no sin that may not be forgiven; there is no sinner that may not be accepted. This very day salvation is freely offered. "To-day is the day of salvation;" "now is the accepted time;" "to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

Let the frantic mummer, rushing from the devouring flame that consumed the scene of idle, stupid, and foolish merriment, be to us a lesson, by which we learn to flee from the wrath to come. And when around us shall be a dissolving world, over our heads will be the opening brightness of a glorious home, where Christ is, with all that have preceded us to glory.

Let us rejoice that when all these things shall be dissolved, "there remains a rest for the people of God," "a house not made with hands;" "a city that hath foundations, whose builder and whose maker is God." And let us remember, that there is something that survives all wreck. The good we do never perishes. What a blessed thought is that! The good we do, though not merit but the evidence of grace, never, never perishes. At that hour that comes to all, and that may come to the youngest and happiest heart that beats on earth, it will be a recollection of intenser joy to have given a cup of cold water to some thirsty sufferer than to have electrified a crowded play-house by your acting, or entranced a mighty audience by the sweetness of your minstrelsy. At that day it will be a happier recollection to have added one stone or rafter to a ragged school, than to have rebuilt Covent Garden Theatre, or to have raised the Crystal Palace. At that day it will be a thought that will give more real joy to you to have fed some hungry orphan, or given a garment to some poor and desolate widow, than to have composed a grander

drama than Shakespeare ever wrote. I condemn not his writings; I can appreciate and admire what is beautiful in poetry, or what is expressive in eloquence; but we may depend upon it, when memory becomes, as drowning men have said, preternaturally susceptible and excited, and when the whole scenes of a lifetime rush, like the shifting scenes of a drama, in rapid succession before us, the amusement we have afforded will give little joy; but the good we have done, the blessings we have bequeathed, the widows we have made to sing for joy, and the orphans we have clothed, and the impulse we have been the humble instrument of giving to the cause of Christ, will awaken in our hearts reminiscences that, while in no sense merit, will yet mingle with the joys of heaven, and be responded to by a welcome at the very gates of glory. "I was in prison, and ye visited me; I was hungry, and ye fed me; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye clothed me;" and another verse shall be added, "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Use this world as not abusing it; in the beautiful words of the Apostle, "Let them that weep, be as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not." Consecrate the world to divine ends; do not canonize it, and make it an idol to be worshipped. The distinction is broad and palpable. You may consecrate your genius, your learning, your riches, but you must canonize nothing. Everything you have should be anointed for the service of Christ; nothing that the world contains is fit to be an idol or a god for the human heart to worship. Set your affections on things that are above; these are weighty; these endure for ever; these are beyond the tides and the transformations of time; these cheer and comfort the heart that looks upon them and dwells amongst them. Thus living and looking up, the lights of time will grow dim as the lights of eternity grow brighter; and the more you have your

heart in heaven, the less it will be chilled by the losses or thrilled by the excitements of a world, the fashion of which passeth away. Carry into all life's duties a sense of God, a sense of true and living Christianity; and if you do so, the church will see you far oftener than the playhouse; the Bible will be read far more than the drama.

LECTURE XVI.

THE SLEEPING CHURCH.

"They all slumbered and slept."—MATT. XXV. 5.

AFTER giving the prescription in the 24th chapter, "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh;" our Lord illustrates it by this most instructive parable. The portion of it which I select for special meditation is, "All of them slumbered and slept." Instead of watching—the duty enjoined in the previous chapter, and the duty which the parable is spoken to illustrate in this chapter—they all of them, mark you, Christian and unchristian, the foolish five and the wise five, slumbered and slept; five of them slept so soundly that they lost the glorious and golden opportunity, and the other five only awoke or were awakened with difficulty, and trimmed their lamps, and, according to the custom of eastern marriages, went out in the dark with their lamps burning, to accompany the bridegroom to the festal scenes which were on such occasions to take place. I will try here to illustrate the nature of the sleep which these virgins slept. It is sinful, perilous; and unless awakened from by some great interposition, it issues in the sleep of death.

The Spirit not only enjoins watchfulness, but cautions against sleeping. "Let us not sleep as do others; they that sleep sleep in the night." Constantly we are warned against sleeping, not with the eyelids, for that is nature; but with the heart, the conscience, the intellect, for that would be sin. There are three sorts of sleep spoken of in the Bible: there is the sleep which nature needs,—

"Tired nature's soft restorer, balmy sleep,"

which is natural and necessary. If many of our stirring

men of business in the city slept a little more in that sense, and woke a little less, they would not be less healthy and prosperous on that account. There is another sleep which the Bible often speaks of; "They that sleep in Christ;" "Them that sleep in Christ will he bring with him." This refers to the dead dust that is laid aside in the grave—the wardrobe of the earth, folded like a robe which the wearer, the soul, has cast off, that disentangled it may ascend into heaven; watched over by the sleepless eye of Him that slumbereth not nor sleepeth, until the roll of the resurrection trumpet sends its vibrations through the homes of the living and the graves of the dead, and that mortal robe put on immortality, and that corruptible garment incorruptibility. There is, lastly, the sleep here spoken of; that sleep which is fraught with peril; that inner insensibility which ruined the five foolish virgins, and from the opiate power of which the five wise virgins were snatched as if by a miracle. Sleep, the figure employed, denotes cessation from work. When a man is asleep, and sleeps soundly and sweetly, the whole body is at rest; but the mind is never at rest. If we could recollect in the morning the dreams of the night, we should find that while the body has been sleeping, the mind has been a thousand miles away, either on the ocean's bosom, or visiting bright scenes, or holding converse with near and dear, yet distant relatives. But the body does rest, at least certain organs of it do. While man rests the loom stands still, the busy mill-wheel ceases to revolve upon its axis; as far as he, the sleeper, is concerned the fields may remain uncultivated, and all work be completely suspended. When Christians sleep—I mean in the third and sinful sense of the word—all missionary and aggressive energy has ceased, or is completely withdrawn; the minister sleeps in the pulpit, the hearer slumbers in the pew. Neither literally closes the eyes, but the mind is off upon the wings of the wind into dream-land; and while the hearer seems to be thoroughly awake, he is literally and truly asleep. As long as men are asleep in that moral

sense in which the word is employed here he does no good, and he gets no good, and he actually cares for nothing. When people sleep they cease to feel an interest, actively, in the things that interest them by day in this present world. When one falls asleep, the senses all retreat from the shores of the senses to which they rise, like the rising tides in early morn, and they shelter themselves in the caves, and bays, and quiet retreats of the inner man, that by this withdrawal they may look forth again upon the world freshened and strengthened, and fit for their work. But during sleep you have no interest in and take no part in that which occupies you during the day. A house may fall, fires may blaze in the next street, an earthquake may rock the building, and the floods may rise and overwhelm thousands; but you do not hear the crash, you do not see the advancing waters; you feel no interest in these things, because you are sound asleep. Whenever a Christian falls asleep, he takes no interest in those things that ought to stir the heart and absorb the energies of a Christian man. Souls may perish at his threshold; the ignorant may be unenlightened; the heathen may be unvisited; he cares as little for them as they care for him. Scenes may transpire across the very street in which he lives of moral or dramatic interest that heaven and hell are agitated by; but he is sound asleep, and he feels no concern about the matter. When you find a person who neither takes an interest in the spread of religion, nor gives a guinea to a Bible Society, or Missionary Society, or Ragged School, or school of any sort, nor feels the least interest in the subject; if he be not a Christian, that man is simply dead; but if he be a Christian, he must be one of the five virgins that were wise in one sense, but sinfully suffered themselves to fall sound asleep when they ought to have watched. When one is asleep there is a cessation of all defence, of personal safety. This is a beautiful provision of God, a most beneficent one; that just in proportion as you feel no interest in others in consequence of your being asleep, in the same proportion there is no guarantee of

safety for yourself. While a man is asleep he is so far unprotected: the assassin may approach him; fire may blaze in the rafters of his house; the earthquake may level its walls with the ground; the sound sleeper enjoys his sleep as if he had impunity from fire, and flood, and earthquake, and lightning. Samson slept so sweetly that Delilah was enabled to cut off his hair; and with the loss of his hair was the departure of his strength. Sisera too slept so soundly that a nail was driven into his temple, and he slept the sleep of death. A Christian falling asleep, in the moral sense of that word, not only fails to take an interest in those subjects already referred to, but he also lays himself open to Satan, who, like a ravenous lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour; or to evil passions, that, like serpents, twine round his heart and sting him to the quick; or he falls so sound asleep upon the pillow of a fancied security, that some great moral catastrophe ends his sleep in that sleep from which there is no awakening. The most useless life is the most defenceless condition. In sleep there is also waste and decay. If a man were to sleep long enough, he would die of inanition. We do not eat and drink when we are asleep; we simply rest. Apply this to sleeping Christians, to the virgins that slept. They raise no cry for bread, "Evermore give us this living bread," for they have no sense of hunger; they utter no cry, "Give us this living water, that we may thirst no more;" they do not feel the need of a Bible, a Saviour, salvation; they are sound asleep, they are conscious of no want, and they offer no prayer, and if they sleep long enough it will end necessarily in the sleep of death. Such are the perils of spiritual apathy, as illustrated and suggested by the very expressive figure employed by our blessed Lord when he says these virgins slumbered and slept.

What is the cause of this moral or spiritual sleep? The first is either entertaining doctrines that are positively false, or turning to a wrong account doctrines that are in themselves true. For instance, if a man makes up his mind that it does not matter what one believes, of course he falls comfortably asleep; and

feels no trouble at all on the subject of religion. If he believes that everybody will be saved—good, bad, and indifferent—of course he goes to sleep, and cares nothing about his soul. If, on the other hand, he holds true doctrines, but perverts them; for instance, if he believes in the doctrine of election, but makes it a sort of reason why he should care for nothing, and think about nothing, but be sure that if he is to be saved he will be saved, and if he is to be lost he will be lost, he will feel no anxiety about his soul; he has imbibed a view of election that enables him to fall asleep. Thus the belief of false doctrines, or the misapprehension of doctrines that are positively true, may lead to that sleep from which there is no awakening. A second cause of this drowsiness is taking too great and absorbing an interest in any of the pursuits or things of this world. Our danger lies less in crossing the line which forms the margin of forbidden things, and more in being absorbed altogether in things most lawful in themselves, but in their excess provocative of a sleep from which we may never be aroused. The things of the world, be they science, or literature, or music; be they any of those amusements, enjoyments, and employments which in themselves are intrinsically right, when prosecuted to excess create this stupor in reference to religious things. Every one knows that there is something that he likes exceedingly; and that if he were to give license to his liking it would become a consuming and exclusive passion. Whatever one allows to dominate within, the danger is that that will carry us away, and involve us in sleep, or stupor, in reference to eternal things. There is another reason, too much worldly prosperity. I really pity that man who is so rich that he has not to work, and so prosperous that all things seem to favour him, and no cross winds ever touch him; I pity him from the heart, for the inevitable tendency is to send him sound asleep in reference to God, a judgment-seat, and an eternity to come. Not only does outward prosperity cause this sleep, but even health has this tendency. Who are the most spiritually-minded men? Generally

speaking, those who have had the greatest losses and crosses, whose estates have been taken from them, whose wealth has taken wings, who have drunk deep of the cup of sickness and suffering.

Let me urge a few earnest dissuaves from sleeping. You are redeemed with precious blood. How can a man sink into insensibility who accepts this grand fact, and feels its infinite value? Every picture of a Christian in the Bible is that of one who runs in a race. Will the racer win the prize if he fall asleep on the course? Will the soldier gain the victory who slumbers in the ranks? Will the wrestler succeed, who becomes the victim of stupor and insensibility? "Awake," says God, "thou that sleepest, and Christ will give thee life." Another reason why we should not sleep is found in the cry which these virgins forgot, namely, "The Bridegroom cometh." Does a bride sleep when the bridegroom comes to meet her in the sanctuary? If Christians be, according to that beautiful figure, the bride, as they are, "The bride hath made herself ready;" and if Christ, the Bridegroom, comes from heaven; then the very figure, a bridegroom coming to his bride, should not occasion terror, but ecstasy and welcome. If then, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh," be the present audible cry, if the signs of nature intimate it, if the convulsions of the nations foreshow it, if men's hearts failing them for fear of the things that are coming on all parts of the earth prove it; surely, surely, it is a powerful reason why we should not only not sleep, but why we should be found where we should like him to find us. Some of you perhaps go to theatres. I do not here pronounce upon the subject, but I may fairly ask, Is the theatre the place where you would like to meet death, or Christ the Bridegroom to find you? Were the Lord to come in power and great glory, would you like him to find you in the theatre, or in that I suppose sister institution the opera, admiring some accomplished *artiste*, fascinated by some grand music, charmed by some beautiful danseuse? Your presence may not be crime, it may

not be sin ; I do not here feel it necessary to pronounce. But somehow I fancy I should not like to be called from the theatre or from the opera-house to meet the Bridegroom at his descent from heaven. One day that glorious One will come ; and if he do not come to us death will overtake us. If I were a member of parliament, I should be very willing to be found in my place advocating the cause of my country and the good of human-kind ; or if I were a tradesman, I should not fear to be found behind the counter selling the best goods at an honest price to every customer ; if I were a sailor, I should be quite happy to be taken fulfilling my duties on the deck ; if a soldier on the field of battle, awful as that is ;—each of these would be the post of duty. Wherever duty carries me, wherever I am engaged in a lawful work, or enjoyment, if you will, there I should not object to be found when the Bridegroom cometh. But there are places—it may be my ignorance—it may be my peculiar taste—somehow where I must say I should not like to be found, when the cry, startling and impressive, shall ring from heaven and descend to earth, and open every grave, and summon the living and the dead before the great white throne, “ Behold, the Bridegroom cometh.”

LECTURE XVII.

READY.

In the prospect of the things coming on the earth the Redeemer says,

"Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."—MATTHEW xxiv. 44.

THE subject before us is the speed and suddenness of the Saviour's second advent. Why are men so reluctant to believe the possibility of the fulfilment of the words; "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh;" no one can say with absolute certainty when; but every one this day may be as he is commanded to be, "ready." Why do so many evade or ignore the Saviour's words? It is the excessive love of the world in their hearts. The heart of one is in his bank; the heart of another is in his home; a mother may make idols of her children; a merchant may make a god of his gold, a sanctuary of his bank, a bible of his cheque-book. Another heart is in the world's pleasures; in the opera, the play-house; and without discussing arguments, objections, and allegations, I ask, as in my previous lecture, would you like to die at the opera? would you like to be found there when Christ comes? I do not here condemn the one or the other; I leave the subject simply as a matter of feeling. Alas! all our hearts are imbedded too deeply in the world. The heart may be in the world of literature, or in politics, it may be in science, or in eating and drinking, in marrying and giving in marriage, in grinding at the mill or in labouring in the field; it matters not what the thing is, if it so absorbs our thoughts and so concentrates and fixes our sympathies that we cannot look

intensely above, or look wistfully forward, or for one moment get beyond the thick atmosphere which we have chosen so ceaselessly and so excessively to breathe. The reason then why so many are not ready is just this; that they are absorbed in the world's thick clay, their hearts are weighed down by its pressure; and so much are they in it and of it that they send up no shooting thoughts to the sky; they have no room within for Christ, no time to spare for prayer, no moments in their closet they can consecrate to reading the sacred volume, and meditating upon the things that pertain to their everlasting peace; their whole inquiry in the morning is, "What shall I eat?" and their whole question in the evening is, "How shall we get gain and how shall we spend next day?" They are so utterly taken up with the things of this world, that for all practical purposes it is the same to them as if there were no God, no such thing as an eternity, no judgment-seat, no Saviour soon to burst on the world with the speed and the splendour of a lightning-flash, and in an hour when men think not. Such cannot be said to be in any sense ready for the coming of our blessed Lord who attend to the truth of all this, but procrastinate what they admit to be a duty from to-day till to-morrow. There are few who do not acquiesce in the importance of religion, and the duty of being ready for so startling an event as the coming of the Son of man; and they mean to be ready; but they wish first to settle this little law-suit, and to get over that difficulty about which they are so much troubled; and settle that other matter; or they want to have another month at the opera, or at the play-house; they wish to have a little more of the world, its enjoyments, its honours, its dignities; and then they mean to make ready for the coming of the Lord. All this is pure delusion. God's command is, "Be ye ready;" if obedience be duty, it lies in the present. All duties are in the present, never in the future. If it be duty at all, it is now your duty. But if God says, "Be ye ready to-day;" and you practically answer, "I mean to be ready to-morrow;" disguise it as you like,

it is saying to God, I will not. But have you instances in the Bible that are at all reassuring in this your idea? Take the case of Felix; he put off a solemn duty to a more convenient season; but there is no record that such a season ever came. By a law, most sure and solemn and grave, he that procrastinates to-day will more easily procrastinate to-morrow; till standing on the very brink of the grave he will procrastinate into ruin. "Be ye ready" belongs to "now, the accepted time;" and your adjourning the duty is simply refusing obedience to the commandment of God.

Let me make the subject plainer, by answering the question, first, what we are to be ready for, and secondly, why we are to be ready.

What are we then to be ready for? We are to be ready to leave all that is about us and all that belongs to us, however cherished, or deeply beloved, when Christ shall call from heaven, "Come up higher." I do not ask you to fling away your wealth, or to give up one innocent enjoyment; I do not ask you to leave your duties, or to renounce your business, or to go into a convent, or mechanically to separate from a world from which moral separation alone is a duty; but I do earnestly beg of you to hold all the wealth that you have so loosely that you can without a very severe struggle let it go when the time comes for the sacrifice; and to hold all your nearest and dearest relationships upon earth so subordinate to the grand relationship, that eternity will perpetuate and seal what it overtakes in you when the Elder Brother comes, and you will be able to leave father, and mother, and sister, and brother, and home, and children, and to count them all but loss in comparison of the glory and the excellency of Him who cometh in an hour when men think not. In other words, it is to be ready to leave this world with all its cares, its troubles, and anxieties, for a better. Is there in this world very much to attract or detain you? Have not some of its brightest spots in the past become disenchanted of much of their beauty by the loss of those whose presence made them so lovely? Is there a fire-

side that hath not a vacant chair? Is there a flock or family in which there is not one dead lamb? Can you take a retrospect of the past, and not see much that reminds you, this world neither is nor is fitted to be the rest of the people of God? Should we not, therefore, sit to it so loosely, and be mixed up with it so lightly, that when the message sounds from the skies, borne by Him who comes in an hour when we expect Him not, "Come up here," you shall be ready, not reluctantly but gladly, to say, "Blessed Lord, we come, we come." But to be ready is more than this; it is also to be willing to be rid of many things that we now fail to get rid of, of many things that now burden us, and that every Christian more or less feebly desires to part with. There is the burden of sin that weighs so heavy on the conscience; there is the burden of sorrow that lies like a cold shadow upon the heart; there is the burden of sickness that sinks many an aged or frail frame to the earth; there is the burden of appetites, desires, and passions, of which we are all more or less conscious; there is the burden of disquiet, dissatisfaction, and yearning for something better, brighter, nobler, than we have tasted yet. Are we not only ready and willing to be rid of this, but do we now cry, "O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, take away its burdens also, we beseech thee." We must also make ready to stand at the judgment-seat of Christ. It is not enough to be ready to leave this world by having a loose and light hold of it; or to be willing and anxious to be disburdened of much that crushes us to the earth; but also to be ready to stand at the judgment-seat of Christ. "We must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ." Now how do you expect to appear? What will be your answer when you stand before the great white throne, and when you are asked why sentence of endless exile should not be pronounced upon you? Have you the answer in the depths of your heart, on your tongue and ever ready to be uttered the instant it is inquired for, "He that knew no sin became sin for me, and bare its curse, and therefore I ought not to bear it; He stood

in my stead, obeyed the law for me, fulfilled all righteousness, and deserved heaven as my Elder Brother; and therefore I am entitled to it." That answer is conclusive and complete; and were you the worst and the wickedest of criminals, if in the hour of death and at the day of judgment you can plead that glorious sacrifice, that perfect righteousness, let the hour be when you think not and where you think not, all is well with you; the bride hath made herself ready, you are prepared for the kingdom of heaven. Be ye then ready; as a ship is ready to set sail—her canvas spread, her tackling right, every sailor at his post—ready as an eagle to stretch her wings and soar to her eyry; ready to depart like the venerable Simeon of old, having seen God's salvation.

What is the reason why we should thus be ready; what necessity is there for this? It is Christ's command; surely that is enough. What He commands is duty, instant duty; the highest and the most obligatory duty. If He had not given the reason, it is sufficient that He has given the command; and as Christians grow in grace the more simply they will accept Christ's command, and the less they inquire the reason why. And He, in the next place, who commands us to be ready, is also competent to say what that readiness consists in. If, therefore, I am commanded to be ready, I open the book that contains the words of Him who commands me, in order to understand what that readiness means. It is not what we think, nor what the minister prescribes, nor what custom says; but what Christ has inspired in his own holy word. Here then is the explanation. "What must I do to be saved?" that is, "How shall I be ready?" The answer is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth on the Son of God hath life; he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "This is life eternal; to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." This is readiness; it is to be found in Christ, not having our own righteous-

ness, "but his." The whole system of the Gospel is a remedial economy. The church is not a home for the perfect, but a dispensary for the sick; the words of the Bible are not laws for the strong, but prescriptions for the feeble and the dying; and hence in the Bible we are oftener told how to be healed, and so made happy and healthy, than commanded to do this or do that, to avoid this or to avoid that. We are patients in a vast hospital—invalids, seeking to recover strength, in the sunshine and the sweet air of heaven. But He who thus commands us to be ready, and who has power to say wherein readiness consists, has promised to make us ready. "He works within us," we are told, "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." We are saved by grace. Salvation is not something we give to God, but something God gives to us; not something we do for Him, but something He has done for us. He creates within us the hunger that He satisfies, the thirst that He removes, the yearning that He answers; for He is the author first and the finisher next of our faith. One of the processes that He employs for making Christians meet for being transplanted from this world to the next, when the Saviour comes at the great transplanting hour, is affliction. The wind that shakes the oak and loosens its roots, when it is to be transplanted into a better soil and a balmier air, exerts a beneficent though a bitter discipline. The affliction that weans us from the world, that wins us to a better; the gap made to-day in our home and filled to-morrow with Christ, is meant to lead us to look and long for that blessed home in which there will be no gaps; every furnace in which we are placed detaches merely the alloy, that the fine gold may come out purer, and brighter, and more beautiful.

Let us try to answer briefly the question, why is it so important to be ready? We are going on an errand such as we never went on before; but what is that errand? It is to see the Son of God. We now see Him by faith; we shall then see Him as He is. And when He comes at that day, all the splendour of the

lightning, all the brilliancy of the noonday sun, all the brightness of the stars, all the glory of the firmament, shall be merged in his brightness as rain-drops are lost in the ocean, as the glow-worm's light is put out by the noon-day sun. We shall see such a sight as we never saw before. If one prepares for the visit of an earthly sovereign, or makes ready to appear in her royal court, is it not reasonable that we should make ready for a meeting the grandest, most solemn, and overwhelming that eye ever saw? It will be no trivial gathering, no gala day, no mere splendid procession; but an interview with Him whom having not seen we love, and in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Such readiness will not interfere with the duties of this world. Did you ever converse with a man who could say honestly from the heart that his religion interfered with his duties to his sovereign, his master, or his home, his business, or his country? If any one ever said so, he either deceived you or he deceived himself; he who makes religion a pretext for neglecting the duties that he owes to his superiors is either a hypocrite or a fool. If a person were to tell me, I was bound to be at my house of business at such an hour, but I was so busy distributing tracts that I was two hours behind; I would at once tell him, The tracts you ought to leave to others to distribute who have the time to spare; you have no right to rob your employer of his time, under the plea and pretext of promoting the kingdom of God. Nothing upon earth, however sacred, can justify the violation of the plain and obvious duties that we owe as servants to masters, as employed to those that are our employers; and therefore the deeper your Christian feeling, the more entire your readiness for heaven; and the more you have your heart where Christ is, the more dutiful, obedient, and laborious you will be in the sphere in which God by his providence has placed you. Thus men will say, Christianity makes the noblest servants of God, the most honest and industrious servants of man; and vindicates itself a pure, an ennobling, an elevating, and an inspir-

ing power, not only for the world that is to come, but in the world that now is.

And at that day, clad in a Saviour's righteousness, washed in a Saviour's blood, resting on Him as your hope, anchored to Him as the great rest amid the storms and tempests of this present world; whenever He shall come, wherever He may find you; if you are what his grace can make you, ready, justified, adopted, sanctified, believing, hoping, loving; then, as you shall stand on the margin of the everlasting rest and at the gates of glory, not an angel will exclude you, not a saint that has preceded you will find fault, not an attribute of God will oppose you; on the contrary, all heaven will ring with the joyous shout, "Open the everlasting gates; let Christ, the King of glory, and these his attendants enter." And when some one shall ask, "Who are these that are clad in white robes, and whence came they?" the answer given will be, "These are they who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night without ceasing."

LECTURE XVIII.

COME, YE BLESSED.

Here is presented a scene of unparalleled magnificence and interest. The court is the universe; the sentenced are immortal men; Christ is the judge, and two eternities the issues.

“ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats,” &c.—MATTHEW XXV. 31–40.

THIS solemn scene is only the historic fulfilment of what is given as prophecy in the pages of Daniel; when he tells us in chapter vii. 13, “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” This same Son of man, thus predicted by the prophet, thus proclaimed by the evangelist, is none else than He—oh, marvellous change!—who sat upon the well of Jacob, and conversed with the woman of Samaria; who walked the streets of Jerusalem; who hung over it, and wept tears that were the awful premonitory tokens of its approaching doom; who was despised and rejected of men; who was emphatically a man of sorrows. What will the sceptic say, what will the philosopher feel, when He they despised, and mocked,

and scorned, and scoffed at, shall appear the throned King, the arbiter of inexhaustible destinies; whose word shall fix for ever, an eternity of woe that flesh and blood will never exhaust, or a destiny of glory and of beauty which eye hath not seen, and man's heart hath not conceived?

When this great scene shall appear; this closing act of the stirring drama of time; when that last act in that dread drama shall arrive, we are often tempted to inquire where will the scene of its manifestation be? It will be on that very earth, on which a cross stood, that a great white throne shall also be raised; and on that very place, in all probability, where the Saviour cried, in words so instinct with sympathy and compassion that after ages have not yet adequately entertained and felt them, "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not;" there, in all probability, where they mocked, and despised, and scorned Him, will He appear throned in majesty, cherubim and seraphim standing before Him ready to execute his behests. Pilate, at whose bar He stood, shall stand at that bar; and every false Scribe and hypocrite Pharisee, that cried, in scorn, "He saved others, and himself he cannot save," shall then see that the Saviour is now the Judge; and every eye shall see Him, and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn; and, awful fact! millions will pray, shedding tears of blood, that the very rocks would crush them, and the everlasting hills would bury them, if only these might conceal them from the reality of what is the most awful expression in God's word, "the wrath of the Lamb."

There is added here, as if to fill up that grand picture, "All his holy angels shall be with him." What a magnificent scene will that be! Earth itself shall be the gigantic amphitheatre, tier rising above tier; each seeing, what none can escape, the spectacle of the Great Judge upon the great white throne. Before Him shall be angels innumerable, bowing like white statues in their stillness as they listen waiting to execute his least

or his mightiest behests. And before Him shall be archangel and angel, ready to move east, west, north, south, as the great thought-bearers and missive-carriers of the Son of God. The angels, that chanted his birth over that lowly manger, shall be present in the glory of his second advent; the angels that ministered to Him in Gethsemane, when He sweated great drops of blood, shall be there to grace the pomp and splendour of his retinue: "mighty angels," in the words of Paul, "innumerable angels," in the words of John; in the Apocalypse, "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of angels," admiring the splendour of the scene; wondering, as they have done for eighteen hundred years, that one who is the King of glory should ever have been such a sufferer; and wondering still more that human nature could have ever been so sunk, so wicked, and so ruined, that it rejected and despised Him, and would have none of Him.

Another trait in this great picture is, "He shall sit upon the throne of his glory." Now He sits upon the throne of his grace; now the worst are welcome to Him, and herein are the riches of the Gospel; now there is no sin so heinous that there is no atoning blood equal to wash it all away; there is no sinner so old or inveterate in his wickedness that there is not for him this day complete and perfect forgiveness. To-day He cries from a throne of grace, "Spare that barren fig-tree only for another year." But when He shall sit upon the throne of his glory all will be changed. Then the awful words, scarcely felt when uttered from the pulpit, shall ring with piercing reverberations in the depths of every lost sinner's conscience, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved;" and there remaineth but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary. At that day a lost spirit would give all that Australia contains for one hour of the privileges we now enjoy; for grace will then be merged in glory, probation will have gone into judgment; and the throne of grace, to which all are welcome now, will be the throne of judgment to

which many will be driven then. Oh, happy, happy are they who now love, believe in, and live to, and for Him, who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, the mighty Saviour, the perfect and precious sacrifice.

“And before him shall be gathered all nations.” Some students and interpreters of prophecy, who take extreme and untenable views, think that the judgment here is only to be exercised upon the heathen and the gentiles; and that the “all nations,” which no doubt may be translated “all the gentiles,” denote only the heathen that never heard of Christ. They argue, how could a Christian say, “When saw we thee hungry? when saw we thee naked?” when every Christian is taught that what he does in Christ’s name will be received as done to and for Christ himself? They infer that those who are thus spoken to are heathen, who never heard the Gospel, but to whom in some way the grace of the Gospel has been applied. I dare not say so. At the same time, I never would assert that all the heathen will be lost. While I feel that there is no salvation save in Christ, I acknowledge that God may, by ways inscrutable to us, so reveal that name to many a heathen that he shall be saved in it, and by it, even when he has never heard it; but this is mere conjecture; our duty remains obligatory and plain, “Go, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” It seems to me, that the “all nations” here does not mean the pagans, or even, exclusively, the gentiles. Refer back to the first commission, and what do we find? “Go, and teach all nations;” or, as another evangelist, Mark, gives it, “Go, and preach the Gospel to every creature;” or, as it is given by St. Luke, “That repentance, and remission of sins, should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem;” showing here that Jerusalem is the first of the nations; and, therefore, that all nations which are gathered before the dread judgment tribunal does not mean exclusively gentiles, still less pagans; but the same “all nations” to whom He told them to preach the Gospel, the same “all nations,” whose beginning was at Jerusalem; and, finally, the same “all nations” of whom He speaks in

this very chapter, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." I, therefore, take "all nations" to mean Jew and Gentile, converted and unconverted, civilized and savage. What a gathering will be there! what a sublime congregation shall be assembled there! the king and the beggar, the prince and the peasant, the rich and the poor; while not one of them will be able to carry to the judgment-seat aught save his responsibility and immortality. The robes of priests, the purple of kings, the wealth of the richest, the honours and dignities of the greatest, are such trash that they must all lay them down upon this side of the grave; and from the mightiest sovereign of the mightiest empire upon earth down to the meanest serf or subject in that empire, all shall appear, with nothing but the recollection of what they have done, the deep, and in many cases withering, sense of what they are; and in the hearts of many that awful looking for of judgment and foreboding of fiery indignation, which shall consume the adversary. That great trumpet voice shall then be heard. Whether this be literal or not, we gather that some loud and piercing sound shall one still night, when men think not, break upon the air; and the instant its reverberations ring through the homes of the living, and the habitations of the dead, the green turf will heave under some mysterious force beneath it; and marble monuments will split; and the ocean itself will fling up its long-sepulchred dead; and the Pharaohs will come forth from their stony pyramids, and great men, and celebrated men, from their resting-places in abbeys and cathedrals, under ancient brasses and monuments of bronze; and brushing off the last traces of the dark and solitary sepulchre, they will look up and see thousands startled by the terrible spectacle—Him whom they pierced, once crucified, crowned now the Lord and King of all.

When they shall gather round Him a mighty multitude, in that valley of decision, "He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep

from the goats." One word, the word that made all those shining stars,—that mighty host in the sky, the mere sentinels and outposts of which we see upon the plains of infinitude—that made the earth, and clothed it with all its beauty; shall cleave like a sharp two-edged sword through the innumerable masses that are gathered round the white throne, and shall split the whole into one eternally separated twain; so that at that day there shall be seen, and felt to be, but two great groups; sinners by nature, and left so, rushing like an awful torrent into that sea of wrath which has no bottom, and no shore; and saints by grace, ascending to that panorama of beauty, and of glory, and of blessedness, which has no horizon and no end. On which side shall we be? I am not sketching a dramatic picture, or reading a piece of poetry from Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' I am telling forth, in the simplest and severest words, words that sink utterly beneath the vastness of the theme, that great and solemn ordeal through which we must all pass. Seen in the light of this ordeal, all distinctions of church, chapel, system, caste, colour, complexion, wealth, poverty, greatness, or meanness, dissolve; and are felt to be, what God grant we may see and feel them more and more to be now, fugitive, evanescent, superficial. There are only two questions of infinite moment; are we sinners, as Adam left us, or saints, as the second Adam has made us? If this question were unanswerable, I should shrink from stating it; if any were now not welcome, I should dread to speak of it; if hell were an inevitable necessity, I should scarcely refer to it; but when I know that the glory of the dispensation in which we now live is this, that there is for all, without exception, an open heaven, and an eternal home, and a highway to it; and that if any perish they perish suicides; when I state this, I can afford to speak of the state of the lost in terms not equal to, but approaching to the occasion; for it is our own fault, and our own fault only, if we perish. There is no decree, or curse, or predestination, crushing any man to hell against his

will. If there were, I should pity but not blame; I should not trouble any with the terrible and inevitable prospect before it occurs. But it is because there is instant forgiveness for every human being, if he will only accept of it, that I can talk of a heaven so beautiful, and speak of a ruin so terrible.

When this great division shall have taken place, Jesus will set His own upon His right hand. He will lead them into shelter, a sequestered refuge, a sunny scene, into which no storm can penetrate, no flame rise, no avenger enter. To that blessed group upon his right He will say, "Come," "Come." This is the olden sound. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary." "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Here is the olden echo that we heard in the chimes of Sabbath bells, in sermons, from the lips of missionaries, at communion tables, in the Bible; "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Now it is, "Come, ye sad;" then it will be, "Come, ye rejoicing." Now it is, "Come, ye poor;" then it will be, "Come, ye unspeakably rich." Now it is, "Come, ye soldiers of the cross, fighting the good fight of faith, the weapons of warfare in your hands;" then it will be, "Come, ye conquerors of Emmanuel, receive crowns of glory, with palms of victory, the evidence that you have conquered." Now it is, "Come, ye martyrs from your beds of sufferings;" then it will be, "Come, ye martyrs, put on your coronation robes, make ready for the bridal of the Lamb. Now is honour, and glory, and salvation to our God and to his Christ." Come, ye Rachels weeping for your children, who would not be comforted; come, and weep no more. Come, ye sorrowful and mourning ones, whose nearest, and dearest, and best beloved have been struck down in India, or in the Crimea, by Delhi, or before Sebastopol, and left on your home one dark shadow, a shadow the more terrible that it is not only on your fireside, but on your hearts. Come, and meet, and mingle with, and recognize — for recognition is as certain as immortality and responsibility — those separated from you for a season, now restored

to you for evermore. Come, Adam and Eve, from your graves beneath the shadow of the walls of Paradise : come, Abraham and Sarah, from your cave of burial under the oaks of Mamre. Come, Paul and Peter, from your resting-places, not where tradition has laid you, but where I have stored and kept your consecrated dust. Come, Knox, who never feared the face of clay ; come, Luther, from your lonely grave in Wittenberg Cathedral ; come, Melancthon, and Calvin also ; come, all ye that have faithfully lived, however obscurely ; and all ye that have died in Me, wheresoever, and in whatsoever state in reference to this world ; come, Baxter, and Howe, and Ridley, and Latimer, and Cranmer ; come, Chalmers, from thy resting-place in Edinburgh ; and come, Edward Irving, your errors renounced, your sins forgiven, from beneath Glasgow's magnificent cathedral ; come, and inherit the kingdom, the oldest and the youngest, prepared for you from the foundation of the world. When these come, what will they enter on ? Not something untried, untasted, and unknown ; it will be the perpetuation of what they have enjoyed upon earth ; for what is the happy state of the saved ? The culmination of a glory commenced in grace. What is heaven ? The flower of grace. What is the happiness of the blessed ? Happiness without mixture, or alloy of any sort or kind. There will be change of place, but not change of direction ; they will receive in heaven not another, but a wider horizon. "Come ;" that is, advance still ; "he that is just, let him be just still." What is their character ? "Come, ye blessed of my Father." You may have been cursed by popes, cursed by councils, as all the great reformers were ; you may have been cursed by the wicked, cursed by the ungodly ; but what does that matter ? The man that is blessed of God can afford to smile at, and pity men that curse him. Did you not often think, ye blessed of the Father, that God had cursed you, or forgotten, or forsaken you ? Yet what you thought cursings were simply disguised blessings ; and the afflictions that fell upon you almost like bolts from heaven in their

suddenness, no sooner touched you than they were transmuted into infinite and endless mercies. The cloud that cast its cold and its freezing shadow over your home broke into innumerable blessings. Those things that pained you as they touched your flesh, no sooner approached the chancel of the soul, the immortal spirit, than they became as the dew by which character was nourished, and ripened into happiness and for heaven. There is not a line of suffering visible upon your road that has not had parallel with it a line of glory, of happiness, and joy. When you thought you were cursed, you were really blessed; what you dreamt in your ignorance were calamities were the very credentials of the people of God; and if God had not so dealt with you, you had never been in that happy group to whom he speaks those thrilling words, "Come, ye blessed." Do you see that mother with an infant in her arms? The infant in its ignorance puts forth its hands to touch the flame of the candle, as if it were a bright and beautiful plaything. The mother draws back its hand, or puts away the candle; much to the child's disappointment, but much to the child's happiness and comfort. So God deals with children of a larger growth. We in our ignorance would seize the flaming thing that would burn to the quick; He in his compassion puts it away, and bids the heart be still; and the reason you know not now he tells you you shall know hereafter. Then, "Come, ye blessed of my Father." But for what? Oh, beautiful! oh, magnificent address, "Inherit!" If he had said, "Receive," it would have looked as if it were something new, as if it were a gift that has no connection with us, and we no connection with it. If he had said, "Come, and purchase," we should have found, like the virgins that slept, that we had neither oil nor money wherewith to purchase. But he says, "Inherit." A son inherits the titles and the property of his father, not because he is virtuous and good, but because he is the son. Inheritance is relationship, is birthright; and the very phrase, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit," shows there is in us no desert, no right, no merit; it is

because He made us sons by his grace, by regenerating us by his Spirit; "for to as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God; and He hath sent into our hearts the spirit of adoption, enabling us to say, Abba, Father;" showing us, therefore, that as the first chime in the church below is by grace, the anthem peal of the church above will still be by grace. Not one stone is there in paradise regained on which shall not be engraven that name which is above every name; not one gem that shall flash its light, and find a place in the diadem of the Prince of the kings of the earth that has not his name on it; not one flower that shall not have the Rose of Sharon for its perfume; not one song of which the key note, the harmony, the end, and the burden shall not be, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory, and honour, and thanksgiving, and praise." Ye who are seeking to rise to heaven by your good deeds are on the wrong road altogether; ye who are attempting to expiate your sins by your sufferings are pursuing a disastrously mistaken process. There is no way to heaven but one; and that way is the old beaten way, Christ "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." There is in the armies of our country, when encamped upon the field of battle, what is called the password; and if you had been in the Crimea, and moving where all was suspicion, and all was necessarily precaution, and knew not the password, you would either have been seized as a spy, or shot as an enemy. Christ's name is the password of the universe; the instant that you mention it angels and archangels will bow before the magnificent utterance, and all heaven shall bid the man right welcome who can say, "I know in whom I have believed; and that he is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day." But you are to inherit what? Some paltry spot, some little acre, some sequestered nook? No. "Inherit the kingdom." All the sacredness of priests shall be yours, and all the dignity of kings; yours shall be all the splendour of a throne without its cares; all the beauty of a diadem

without the aches in the head that wears it; all the happiness, and more than the happiness ever dreamed of on earth, and none of the alloy that invariably mixes with the purest. When all the pomp and splendour of terrestrial kingdoms shall have passed away like a vision; when all the brightness of this world shall be quenched, that empire shall only begin its advancing progress, its never retreating march, its ever widening circle; your happiness and your horizon expanding with the years of eternity, till men marvel that in this world of ours sin ever had such a grasp as to dim the sheen, or dilute the splendour, or diminish the attraction of things divine, unseen, and eternal. This heavenly kingdom, we are told, is "prepared for you." Prepared by whom? Here is the answer, "I go to prepare a place for you." Then every spot of it is prepared by the hand that was nailed to the cross for us; it shall not be a strange land, it will have a home-like aspect, a place where the Elder Brother has long been its preoccupant for us. And what gives it to many a truly home-like aspect is that some of us have our children there, mothers, sisters, and wives there, some the nearest and the dearest there, till this world feels as the foreigner's land, and yon world grows daily into all the beauty and the gentleness of a happy home; "a kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And oh! what a kingdom! Its soil ever fresh with flowers, the very stars in its canopy the scriptures of the sky; all sounds harmony, all sights light; the wide universe about you the temple whose builder and whose maker is God.

It is the rest that remaineth for the people of God, in which is the realization of their brightest hope, the object of their grandest anticipation: the presence of God and of the Lamb.

Are you on your way to that kingdom? Have you the kingly spirit? Have you the priest-like character? Are you pleading the only password? Are you blessed of the Father with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places? How worthless is posthumous fame! When one reads of statesmen, and poets, and painters, all

hoping that after they are dead they will be praised, what a miserable hope! It is like wishing to have loaves upon one's tombstone, when one sleeps in death beneath. But there is a posthumous renown that will indeed be noble—one word uttered from the lips of Jesus, "Come, ye blessed;" one "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me," will sound sweeter than the shout of loyal millions.

There, are those everlasting gardens,
Where angels walk and seraphs are the wardens;
Where every flower, brought safe through death's dark portal,
Becomes immortal.

LECTURE XIX.

DEPART, YE CURSED.

The other side of this picture presents a very awful scene.

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”—MATTHEW xxv. 41–46.

AFTER our Lord's address to those upon his right hand, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;” he turns round, and addressing those upon his left, pronounces the only awful curse recorded in the Gospel. Evidently at this point he lays aside the priestly office, leaves the altar and ascends the throne, and as King of the universe He pronounces righteous and inexhaustible retributions. His own hear the olden voice, “Come, ye blessed,” and continue that ceaseless approximation to the infinitely distant centre, each step a new ledge of happiness and joy; their happiness growing as the years of eternity accumulate. To those on his left He

addresses words of which we cannot but speak with deep and awful solemnity ; words desolating, withering, scathing, too terrible to be conceived,—too awful to be trifled with, “Depart, ye cursed ;” an inexhaustible centrifugal impulse, ever retreating from the fountain of all light, and life, and joy, each step in the terrible descent aggravating their woe, and increasing their misery, and no step ever touching the bottom of that unsounded sea of sorrow. “Depart,” and they depart for ever, and for ever, and for ever. In his presence is fulness of joy, and the redeemed are ever nearing and enjoying it ; in his absence is fulness of misery, and the lost in hell are ever drinking of it ; the guilty are ever seeking to be rid of all recollection of God and themselves ; the righteous ever thirsting for God, and ever gratified as they thirst, neither receiving a new direction ; for what is the condition of God’s people now ? Ever coming to Christ. What is the condition of those that are not Christ’s people ? Ever departing from Him. What is the great conflict of a worldly, thoughtless, ungodly man ? To get rid of God. He says in all his employments and all his enjoyments, “Let not God’s eye see me ; let not God’s presence be with me.” It is one of the best tests we can apply to any work we are engaged in, “Could I bear God here ?” That ledger that will not bear the inspection of God ; that counting-house that will not endure the look of God ; that transaction in business which you endeavour to hide or which you wish to hide from God ; that deed, whatever it may be to flesh and blood, which will not bear the searching eye of God ; all this is evidence of wrong. It may be the commencement of that worm that never dies, and of that fire that is never quenched.

The character of those thus addressed is “cursed.” “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.” There is nothing but condemnation to them that are out of Christ. The law of old was, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the law.” To the curse of a broken law is added now the still more fearful curse of a rejected or a neglected

Gospel. But the contrast here is remarkable. When He speaks to the saved He says, "Ye blessed of my Father." When He speaks to the lost He says, "Ye cursed," He does not add "of my Father." In the case of the one class their blessing is traced to its origin, God; in that of the other the curse is a retribution on character provoked by themselves. All of good that begins on earth and culminates in glory is from God; all of pain, of sin, of tears, of sorrow, and of suffering, that are experienced on earth and aggravated in hell are not from God. In life's sunny places I see my Father; in life's dark and dreary places I see my sin. Ever as I gaze on storm, earthquake, tribulation, bereavements, losses, and crosses, I see the evidences of what sin has done; but ever as I gaze upon what is beautiful, and bright, and happy, and holy, I see pervading all, giving tone, colouring, and shape to all, the loving kindness and the grace of our Father. The curse is from sin; the blessing is entirely from God. This distinction runs through the whole of the New Testament Scripture. In the epistle to the Romans we have a very remarkable illustration of it, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction;" "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction;" but it is not said by whom. He adds in the next verse, "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." God is the author and the origin of the preparation of mercy. If one reads the Bible not in the light of creed, or confession of faith, or of Calvin, or Arminius, but in the light of itself only, he will see that all that is good is directly from God; all that is evil is entirely and exclusively from the creature; and whilst the glory of all that is good redounds to God, the discredit and the dishonour of all that is evil rest with and upon the creature, and nowhere else. There is contrast, not only between "blessed of my Father," and "cursed," but also between "inherit a kingdom," and "depart into fire." The two contrasting points are "a kingdom" and "fire;"

the one, the glorious receptacle of the blessed ; the other, sin its fuel, sinners its sufferers, eternity its inexhaustible length ; the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels. There is also contrast in "a kingdom prepared *for you*," and "everlasting fire," (prepared not for you, but) "prepared for the devil and his angels." In other words, God made not hell for any human being ; it was never meant for an immortal soul, it was never kindled by Deity for the torture of any one of his creatures ; and if any lost spirit finds itself in hell, it sees it has forced itself into a doom which God never meant for it. It is hell prepared for fallen angels that kept not their first estate ; for whom no atoning blood was shed, for whom no Saviour died ; prepared for them because they were never to be redeemed, and not for man, who, awful recollection in the realms of the lost, will feel the fire that is never quenched, the worm that never dies, to be this most corroding recollection, God's decree did not damn me ; predestination did not damn me ; God's word did not damn me ; I am a suicide self slain here, because I would not go elsewhere. I can conceive no thought more terrible than to know that we have rushed in a direction the very opposite of what was opened to us ; rushed against remonstrances, against providential warnings, against the calls of God's word, against the solemn testimony of his Gospel, and have perished. The lost in hell will ever say, ever feel, "We did it all ourselves, and nobody did it for us ;" the saved in glory will ever feel and ever sing, "We earned none of it ; grace did it all, from the first pulse of the new heart on earth, to the first beat of the new heart in glory."

The awful record is added as the fulfilment of the curse, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." What a dead march will that be ; what an awful funeral procession will start on its downward career from that great white throne ; what a wail and *miserere* from myriads ! I wonder if the saved will witness it. One cannot help thinking that in such a case, as they behold the awful spectacle, tears will be shed by the redeemed, as they touch the margin of the better

land. It is so awful that any one of God's creatures should have been so infatuated, so criminally opposed to the blessed Gospel, should have so rejected, despised, and neglected it, that they have prepared for themselves so dreadful, so terrible a doom. Is this awful doom a reality? It is. Are souls lost? The answer of Scripture is, they are. Is there such a thing as departure into everlasting hell? The answer is, "These *shall* go away." In the words of Robert Hall, "What, if it were possible to conceive such a thing,—what will be the funeral obsequies of a lost soul? Would it be sufficient to cover the heavens with crape, or to clothe the earth with mourning? or were the whole of nature to become animate and vocal, would it be possible for her to utter a groan too deep, or a cry too piercing to express the magnitude of such a catastrophe?" And in the still more impressive words of one mightier than Robert Hall, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

The sorrow of the lost will be something beyond all that we can conceive. We need not a material fire to make the sufferings of the lost terrible enough. All have felt incidentally the sense of remorse; it is one of the most excruciating feelings that the human heart can be pierced by. Conceive that feeling intensified to an infinite degree; conceive that remorse experienced not only for what you have done, but for what you have lost, neglected, despised, and trodden under foot. Imagine the society all around you to be intensely and unspeakably polluted and evil; while all the vile passions of the corrupt and diseased human heart, crawl out like scorpions from their nests in all directions. Picture over all the thick gloom of an impenetrable curse; memory raking out of its embers every past wickedness, and as its leaves are turned over in the light of that lurid flame, revealing what conscience ever moans and grieves over and rebukes. Add to the awful tragedy no hope for ever and for ever of any deliverance; and I need not material fire to constitute a torture which it is best to be silent on, for human words but mock, and

human sensibilities shrink when they attempt to depict and to delineate it. This leads me, therefore, to the last subject—the duration of such curse, or the eternity of future retribution, denied in the most emphatic terms by some very able and argumentative writers; because the horror of the prospect has appeared to flesh and blood so intensely awful that they have tried to escape from the terrible foreboding, by showing that the tortures of the lost are not only mitigated by hope, but are transient in their nature, and eventually must terminate. In other words, just as some preachers try to frighten people into heaven by depicting the terrors of hell, which is not the Gospel; these preachers are leading people into ruin by showing that hell is not so terrible after all; and that if you have, they would say, the misfortune to stumble into it in your search after a holier and a happier place, you need not be alarmed; the hour of deliverance from it will be soon at hand. Now, it seems to me, if these preachers would only show that the road to heaven is so plain that a way-faring man cannot err therein; that the gates of glory are so wide open that all, and thousands upon thousands more, may enter; that every voice from heaven and every cry upon earth bids you welcome; and that your ruin can be effected by none in heaven, and in hell, and on earth, but by yourself; if that be true, surely it is the more profitable way to show how easy it is to get to heaven, and how impossible it is for any man to be lost who lays hold with all his heart upon Christ, the hope set before him. But to show that the theory advanced by these men is false, I must refer you to Scripture. I feel no pleasure in showing it; my wish is to believe that the torments of the lost are not eternal; that hell is not so terrible; for I must say, it is the one difficulty I have encountered in studying this holy book, that there should be one spot in God's magnificent universe where tears will be ceaselessly shed, where the wild and the piercing wail of sorrow will rise disturbing the harmony of songs that are perpetual; and where there shall be ceaseless sinning, and therefore ceaseless suffer-

ing. I say, that is just the thought that has always struck me as the most difficult; and my wish would be to prove that our interpretation is not correct. But I am a Protestant; the Bible is my rule of faith; what I wish, what flesh and blood would like, or what is most sentimental, or what is most delightful, are not the determining elements of my creed; "to the law and to the testimony," I must bow before that oracle. "Thus saith the Lord" settles all difficulties and substantiates all truth. Throughout the whole New Testament two distinct states are constantly referred to. "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." I read in another passage, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." I read again, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;" "cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." Similar to these words are "Come, ye blessed;" and "Depart, ye cursed." These two states constantly come out together; the time that measures the duration of the one invariably determines the duration of the other. If therefore "everlasting," as applied to the punishment of the lost, means a limited period, I cannot see how you can escape the logical inference, that "everlasting," as applied to the case of the blessed, must be limited also; the same word—nothing less and nothing more—is attached to the one that is attached to the other; and you cannot pour cooling and refreshing floods into the midst of the lost without emptying that glorious fountain from which the saved in heaven shall drink ever-refreshing streams. If there be a limit in the duration of the penalty of the lost, I cannot see how you can come to the conclusion that there shall be no limit to the duration of the happiness of the blessed. The same phraseology, the same adjectives, the same

strong and expressive words, are applied. In fact, words of yet greater emphasis, denoting, if possible, intenser duration, are applied to the sufferings of the lost, than to the happiness of the blessed. "Everlasting contempt;" "everlasting punishment;" "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord;" "eternal damnation;" "eternal fire;" "the blackness of darkness for ever;" "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever;" "unto ages of ages of ages." The argument of those that take the opposite view is, that the word "everlasting" is used occasionally in a limited sense. I answer, it is. But be it observed, it is modified by the subject to which it is applied. We read of "the everlasting hills;" that is the hills that last as long as the earth itself lasts: they are not to be moved. But I take even that application in its strict and literal sense, holding, as I do, that the earth is never to be annihilated, but to be one of the most beautiful orbs amid all the stars and constellations of the universe; and that its hills and valleys shall never be destroyed, or cease to be. The word "everlasting," as applied, for instance, to the Mosaic covenant, is used in a limited sense, but does that prove that it must always be used in a limited sense? If so, then "the everlasting God" must mean a God that does not live for ever. If we find that "everlasting" is employed in nine cases out of ten in its strict sense, and that incidentally and by a figure it is employed in a limited sense,—we do well, I think, to use it and understand it as the spirit of God does, and not to make the universal bow to the incidental, but the incidental rather yield to the universal. But it has been thought by others that the souls of the lost are to be annihilated; and that ceaseless suffering is not to be the conscious experience of any sentient and immortal being. One might almost wish that in such cases this could be so; but will the words warrant it? What is the opposite of everlasting life? The answer is, "Everlasting," not cessation of, "punishment." But punishment implies consciousness of the infliction. And besides,

"everlasting life" in Scripture does not mean simply an everlasting being, or the perpetuation of the present life; but it means life on a loftier level, a higher, nobler, better state of existence. The correlative of everlasting being would be everlasting annihilation; but the proper correlative of everlasting happiness is not annihilation, but everlasting punishment. The phrase, we allege, "everlasting punishment," denotes conscious, sentient feeling, and not cessation to be; or what some allege, the annihilation of the soul, if capable of annihilation, altogether. But the argument employed by Professor Maurice and others is, that this is inconsistent with the goodness of God; that such punishment is inconsistent with the benevolence of God. In the first place, we must recollect that God is not the Lucretian deity, all love, all goodness; but that he is holy, just, faithful, true; and if the escape from such suffering should be incompatible with his justice, it is in vain to plead that such punishment conflicts with his goodness. We do not know what may be incompatible with God's goodness. In this land, the highest goodness is exhibited by the sovereign, when a great criminal is visited with condign punishment; and it may be an essential display of the highest goodness of Deity that those who have rejected so great a Saviour should be the recipients of so inexhaustible a curse. It has been argued again that this everlasting punishment is contrary to the justice of God, in so far they say, as it is unjust to inflict an everlasting punishment for an incidental and a temporary evil. Does our experience justify or contradict this? Do we not find in society, that one false step taken at twenty, will project a shadow over a life that extends to eighty? Do we not find in the providential government of God, that one sin committed—it may have been in thoughtlessness—casts a destructive and a ruinous influence over all the years of your life that follow? If it be unjust to inflict enduring punishment upon a whole lifetime of sin, and therefore it may militate against the justice of God, it must be unjust to let a whole lifetime in this world suffer because of one

incidental offence against the law of God. But may it not be that there is in sin something that we have never fathomed, and do not yet know? If nothing short of the blood of incarnate God could expiate sin, must there not be in sin a virus that we never can estimate, an intensity of evil of which we have no adequate conception? Judging of the demerit of sin by the stupendous interposition that was necessary to deliver from it, there may be in sin that immensity of evil that needs an eternity of suffering: not for its expiation, for that is impossible, but to express the just and terrible retribution that necessarily belongs to so great an evil. Others have argued in another way: is there not a hope in the rolling epochs of eternity to come, that the glorious Gospel will be proclaimed, even in the regions of the damned; and that that one word, "Come," will be heard there, after centuries have rolled away, and sufferings adequate to the offence, as they suppose, have been endured? There is no intimation in the whole Bible that any covenant rainbow shall spread itself upon the concave that hangs over the lost; there is not one whisper from Genesis to Revelation that the angel of the everlasting Gospel, on his flight of mercy and beneficence, shall ever preach to the damned one hope of mercy, one prospect of forgiveness. If the Gospel will be preached to the lost, what mean these words: "My Spirit will not strive with man any more?" What mean these words: "I must work the work of him that sent me: the night cometh when no man can work?" What mean these words: "What thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might: for there is no work nor device in the grave, whither thou art hastening?" What do the words imply, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness?" What is the meaning of "He that despised Moses' law died under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing?" "We are in them

that perish," says the apostle, "the savour of death." "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?" In fact, if a lost spirit can be saved by the Gospel out of hell, then what would follow? That the Gospel must be preached with greater power, and that grace must be bestowed in greater richness, on the lost in hell, than ever were exhibited and extended to those that were candidates for heaven in the church upon earth. But it has been said by others, that all suffering must necessarily exhaust itself; and that therefore the sufferings of the lost must come to an end. The illustration they would suggest is this:—a person commits a crime; he is imprisoned, or banished for seven years; if he spend the seven years in exile, he has suffered the penalty, and he goes free. But suppose during those seven years he has committed worse crimes: then another seven years will be added to his punishment; the law requiring that ever as the criminal sins, or commits fresh crime, punishment must ever be added to and continued. It is so of necessity with the lost. They are ever suffering, because they are ever sinning. Sin is cumulative in its nature, suffering cumulative, as the consequence of that sin. I can see no hint that the Gospel will be preached to the lost; that annihilation will end the sorrows and the agonies of the condemned. I can discover no indication that suffering is expiatory in any sense. If any sufferings could expiate sin, the Son of God had not died a sacrifice for our sins upon the cross. If the sufferings of a creature could be accepted as the expiation of this creature's sins, God's truth would be compromised in this, for he has said, "The soul that sins shall die:" but the soul that sins does not die for ever, and God thus proves unfaithful to his threats; my confidence in his promises is shaken, and I cannot be sure that the soul that believes shall live for ever and ever. Unless, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," be a literal reality, I cannot see how, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," is a literal reality. If the first be a myth, an exaggerated and alarming shout, the second can be nothing else; you cannot do away with the certainty of

a penal hell without sweeping away with it the prospect of a paternal heaven ; the same words that describe the one, changing what ought to be changed, describe the other. I must therefore conclude, that as heaven is an everlasting kingdom, hell is an everlasting misery : as the one shall have no end, and endure no admission of sin, or sorrow, or tears ; the other will experience no end, and taste no admission of happiness, hope, joy, or peace.

O tremendous scene ! A splendid palace descending in the consuming flame ; a magnificent ship full sail sinking in the all-devouring sea ; the noblest cathedral struck by the lightnings of heaven, and shivered into splinters ; a whole city engulfed by an earthquake ; are feeble, feeble, feeble illustrations of that last terrible catastrophe which ends the reign of sin upon earth, and commences the sufferings of them that have rejected the only Saviour. But while I state this, because God's word says it, let me again remind all, hell is not for you ; you cannot be driven there, you may go there ; you cannot be impelled there against your wish, you go there willingly. What are you now living in ? Are you doing everyday in your counting-house, on the Exchange, in Parliament, in your families, in the world, in society, in the sanctuary, what your conscience tells you is inexcusably criminal ? You are paving your road to ruin. Are you every day hesitating about the acceptance of that Saviour as the only sacrifice for your sins, and trusting to something else ? You are on the downward course. But if you can say from the heart, " My whole trust for a judgment-seat is nothing I have done, nothing I have suffered, nothing I have said ; but only what Christ has suffered for me, and done for me ; " and if you can say that, though with thousands of drawbacks, with the memory of many thoughts you would now unthink, many deeds you would undo, many words you would recall ; with much in your nature and experience every day that is sinful, and wrong ; yet if you can say from the very heart, my struggles and efforts are against all that is evil, my prayers are daily offered

that the Spirit of God would make me conqueror over all : and my conclusion every night is this, my trust is —“the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;” then fear not, you are on the road to heaven ; angels will welcome you ; Christ gives you eternal life ; and He that has begun in your hearts the least work of grace, will not leave you till he has consummated it in the mightiest and most lasting work of glory.

LECTURE XX.

THE GLORY-FILLED EARTH.

The son of Jesse breathed his last prayer in these glorious words,—

“Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.”—PSALM lxxii. 19.

THIS is the prayer of David, the son of Jesse, in which he prays that the whole earth,—no village, hamlet, capital, country, continent, or island excluded, or exempt,—may be filled with the glory of God—a glory that involves in its bosom the highest happiness and the most lasting pleasures to all.

Once this prayer was an impossibility. Adam could not have prayed in Paradise, “Let the whole earth be filled with thy glory;” for he must have praised his Maker that the whole earth already was filled with his glory; he saw it lying like a soft and shining atmosphere over all space; every bush in that beautiful Eden burning like Horeb’s bush; every mountain glowing with the splendours without the transience of Mount Tabor; and in all whispers of the wind—in all chimes of the waves—in all murmuring of brooks—and in the voice of God at early morn and dewy eve he heard the most delicious music. On every acre and on every footpath of that beautiful and sequestered spot he recognized the footprints and the trail of the glory of his God and Father as he passed by. He praised him that the earth was filled with his glory; he could not pray that that might be which was already come. But since that day—I appeal to hearts that falter in their beating, to the eye, the ear, and all the senses, to the annals of nations, to the history of the world—a great

deterioration has passed upon our earth; deep shadows are now mingled with its brightest sun-streaks; and the lingering and flickering bits of sunshine alone remain to remind us what a beautiful Paradise has passed away; yet presenting tokens and prophecies also that a yet more beautiful Paradise is one day to dawn. In our present experience there is scarce a line of glory upon our world that a line of suffering or a shadow of sorrow does not run parallel with. Yet, fallen as our world is, one can see traces of what it once was. An architect visiting Jerusalem guessed from the fragment of an arch what must have been the measure of its span, and the resting-place of its piers. From seeing the fragments of this ruined world, we may form a rude conjecture what a magnificent thing it once was; and even in its darkest places one can notice many things that prove if it hath fallen, it is not utterly forsaken. Are there not some days in the loveliest summers that seem rays of glory just come forth from the gates of Paradise, to give us a transient glimpse of a faded perfection? Even in the deepest winters, the laurel and the bay tree, the holly and the group of evergreens, seem to say, "We will not yield as others have; we will keep the path open between the summer that has left us and the summer that is to come," thus ministering to man's heart hope in the deepest depths of nature's decay; and with other vestiges leaving on the bosom of our world memorials that if fallen it is not altogether forsaken. But the mere natural glory that breaks upon our world in fragments is shaded by the departure of that moral glory which once overspread the whole heaven and earth as with the very presence of God. If in Adam's day all was harmony without, it was only responsive to a deeper harmony within. If man saw all the tokens of perfect peace above, around, and beneath, he appreciated and felt the peace the more because of the perfect repose and quiet that was within. But since the fall, these sombre shadows have covered up not only the outer glory, but they have also projected themselves into the very heart of man; and in

his inmost soul he feels that more has gone wrong with it than even with the world outside. He needs to pray, whether he looks within or without, with intenser fervour, O Lord, let the departed glory return; let Ichabod be erased from the surface of our globe; let the days of Eden come round again; let the tide of sin and sorrow ebb, and let the whole earth be covered with the glory of God. But do we not read in the Psalms even in this dispensation, and in the world as it is, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth forth his handiwork?" If then the heavens declare the glory of God, is it so shaded as has been alleged? Few, indeed, can study the heavens without seeing a glorious apocalypse of God's glory; no one can read the last discoveries of astronomy without being struck with the evidence of the magnificence of that Being who sits enthroned amid the shining hosts that are encamped on the plains of infinitude. Were we to see a starry frosty night once in our life, it would be an apocalypse such as we should never forget. It is the commonness of the spectacle that dims its beauty, or rather deadens our sense of it. But if it be so beautiful now, what must it have been ere that mist between us and the sky had exhaled from earth! If while we see nature through a glass darkly there be so much to admire, what must have been the splendour of the spectacle when we saw it face to face! It is, however, necessary to explain what is the glory of God. A human or finite being receives glory when something is added to him that he had not; an infinite being receives glory just in the ratio in which He is made known. The more we know of man the more we detect the evidences of the fall, and the less we admire him; the more we know of God, the intenser is our admiration. To glorify a creature we must add to him dignities that he has not; to glorify Deity we have simply to make known more of what He actually is. If you wish to see God's glory, or rather to read a record of it, let us refer to that passage where Moses prays, "I beseech thee, O Lord, shew me thy glory." What was the answer?

The Lord descended in the cloud, and proclaimed the name, which he there regards as synonymous with the glory of God. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." That is the glory of God. In this revelation of God's glory there is an answer to every doubt and difficulty of a perplexed sinner. Does some one say, I am poor, guilty, and ruined, and have nothing of good in me, and am myself nothing in God's sight? His name is the Lord Jehovah, who can create a good thing out of a bad thing, and anything out of nothing; and, therefore, is able to transform the greatest sinner into the greatest saint. But if you should answer, My heart is so hard, my feelings, appetites, and passions, so deranged, that I have no hope whatever; his name is the Lord God, the omnipotent God; nothing is too hard for Omnipotence to achieve. But you say, I am a sinner, a miserable sinner; sinner in thought, sinner in word, sinner in deed. I answer, you only want to see another ray of this bright glory pass before you to give you peace; for if you be a sinner, what is the next beam of his glory? He is merciful. What is mercy? If there were no sin there could be no mercy. Mercy is love passing through the prism of a Saviour's mediation, and refracted into all the beautiful colours of the covenant rainbow. God is good to angels, He is love to the unfallen, He is mercy to sinners. And, therefore, if you be a sinner, a chief sinner, an inveterate sinner, let a ray of glory shoot through your heart, and you have a God who is mercy—the very thing you need. Ah, you reply, that is very true; but that does not comfort my soul. I have nothing to give for it, and, therefore, there is no hope for me. What is the next ray of his glory? He is gracious. What is grace? Literally good given gratis. What was the prayer of John Wickliffe, the morning star of the Reformation? "Good Lord, save me gratis." God saves only gratis. If you were to pay anything, there is no mercy for you; if you promise anything by way of equivalent, there is no

mercy for you; if you offer to endure anything as expiation, there is no mercy for you. You must take mercy in all its amplitude, without promise, pledge, or anything on your part but grace, just as God gives it you. But you answer, This may be all very true; but I have sinned so long, I have sinned against light, against conscience, against law, against love. So you have; and had I been your judge, you had been crushed long ago; or had the most tender-hearted man been your judge, you would have been destroyed; but let a ray of this glory sweep through your troubled spirit, and what does it show? That whilst He is merciful and gracious He is also long-suffering. How glorious is this attribute! He suffers long, and is not easily provoked; delighting in mercy. But if you should say, Ah, this is very true, very comforting; but it does not meet all my case; for so many have drawn upon his mercy, so many have got it gratis, such multitudes have tasted of his long-suffering, that I fear it is exhausted long ago. If God were a cistern, his mercy would have been exhausted; but we are told He is a fountain, and a living fountain, inexhaustible, and springing up to everlasting life for ever and ever. The ray of his glory that meets your case is that while He is long-suffering, He is also abundant in goodness and truth. But if you should say, So many generations have drawn upon Him, from the world's gray fathers that trod the deserts of Palestine and the pavements of Egypt; the prophets, and evangelists, and apostles, and martyrs, and reformers, and the long procession of sufferers, have all, generation after generation, drawn upon his goodness, drank of his mercy, sought it gratis, and enjoyed it in all its fulness, that I fear it is impossible that God can have supplied so long a world of rebels so countless, and all his mercy is surely dried up long long ago. The answer is, He keeps mercy for thousands of generations. But you add, perhaps, Well, all this is very delightful; but I have been guilty of sins of thought, sins of word, sins of deed, all kinds and degrees of sin. I have no doubt of it; and I am sure you are

far more guilty than you think, and far more so than you feel ; but look at another ray of God's glory ; He forgives iniquity ; that is the first sort of sin ; transgression, that is the second sort ; and sin, that is the third sort. In other words, He forgives sins of thought, sins of word, sins of deed. What then is the prayer of David ? That this glory may overflow the world like an illuminated ocean ; that wherever the sunshine penetrates, God's glory may penetrate also ; till every star that you see in the firmament suggests the bright and the morning star ; till every rose that you smell the fragrance of reminds you of the Rose of Sharon ; till every stream reminds you of the river of living water, and every tree reminds you of the tree of life ; and all sounds, and all sights, and all scenes, set forth the glory of Him whose highest glory is exhibited when He stoops from heaven to forgive the greatest sin, and thus the experience of a few will become the possession of all mankind. Such, then, are the component parts of that which is here called the glory of God.

Now let us ascertain why David prayed thus ; and why we too should offer up this prayer. First of all he thus prayed what we are bound to pray also, because there are countless places in our world on which this rich glory does not shine. Are there not pagan tribes that never heard of a Saviour's name ? Are there not jungles in India into which neither nature's sunshine nor the glory of the Sun of Righteousness have ever penetrated ? Are there not deserts whose bosoms have never been trodden by the feet of them that bring glad tidings of great joy ? Is there not many an ocean on which the mariner, as he wrestles with the wind and the wave, sings no hymn, prays no prayer, reads no Bible ; nor sees in the ocean one single gleam of the glory of God ? If so, is it not our duty, is it not our instinct, to pray, " O Lord, let the whole earth be filled with thy glory ? " But there are not only places which have not been visited by this glory, but there are places that resist it when it seeks admission. The crescent still protests against the cross ; and the Mahometan looks

upon the steady approach of the glory spoken of as a bitter national calamity. In China, a stupid and debasing superstition has raised its formidable walls to throw back the influx of the light and glory of God. In India, the inveterate superstitions of a thousand years resist and oppose the entrance of the glory of God. And not only in these countries do we find resisting forces, but in Russia we see all the superstition of Rome without its terrible consistency; in Italy and Austria, the fogs that rise from the marshes of a dark and miserable apostasy. But, alas! we need not go abroad for proofs of great crime, or dark places; read the judicial proceedings of our country; come with me not across the ocean, but across the partition or brick wall that separates St. Giles from St. James; and you will find people from whose hearts and homes everything like the light and love of God seems to have ebbed away, and to have left little but wreck and ruin, capable of terrible mischief; and incapable, without transforming grace, of doing any good.

Let me tell you too that those magnificent palatial residences in the west are never safe when revolution and discontent are brewing in the miserable dens of the east. Let me remind you that when the foundation rocks, the apex of the pyramid will be very precarious indeed. And if you wish to do the utmost to make your own condition more secure, you will do more to make the masses more enlightened, more contented; more acquainted with the glory, more impressed with a sense of the goodness, the mercy, and the loving-kindness of God. If you feel the great degradation in which thousands are plunged; if you agree with me in conclusions which facts, the most stern and irresistible of all arguments, establish—that vast masses, in every British city, are the victims of the most withering and blasting influences in this world, and aliens and strangers to the bright hopes and blessed prospect of the Gospel of Christ; if you feel that God has blessed you, that he has given you light and the knowledge of your duty as well as the enjoyment of rich privileges—you will not

rest satisfied till the whole earth is filled with the glory of God.

When David prays that God's glory may thus cover the earth, he prays that every individual may feel and taste of its influence, that no heart may beat that is not in unison with God ; that every pulse in human nature, from the humblest even to the highest, may be love to God ; that every district may be covered with this glory—that there may be no lane, nor court, nor alley, into which the sunshine of heaven does not penetrate, and none into which the light of the Sun of Righteousness does not shine. No interest that we feel in the distant must make us overlook the near ; we must not carry corn to the ends of the earth, whilst many are starving from want at our own doors and upon our own thresholds ; we must not be so taken up with the romance of converting a world, that we forget the very plain but very dutiful necessity of converting an individual under the shadow of our own residence. Whilst we pray for each individual, and for each district of our country, we at the same time still pray that the whole earth may be covered with the glory of God, that every continent may bask in it—that every capital may reflect it from its spires, that the hum of great cities may have it for its key-note ; that all the nations of the earth, inspired by love, illuminated by truth, may constitute together, one worshipping, united, and happy church ; until the nations rise to a state of peace, of happiness, and rest, that will multiply with the multiplying years and ages yet to roll ; and David shall no longer say, " Let the whole earth be filled with his glory ; " but shall sing, " The whole earth is filled with thy glory."

There are many and strong reasons why we ought more and more to pray this prayer. The first reason is sympathy with man simply as a sufferer : if you want to be humane, and to do the slightest good to man as an individual, you should pray and try to practise this prayer. The highest happiness of man is involved in the greatest glory of God. Christianity feeds the roots of all

social development. Where is it that nations have reached a culminating grandeur? Where Christianity has struck deepest its roots. And, therefore, when you pray that the whole earth may be filled with God's glory, you pray that there may be the most substantial temporal happiness to your fellows; and that our country under the influence of the Gospel may, as a country, rise to its greatest pitch of happiness, peace, and enjoyment. But you should pray this prayer still more because of the preciousness of each individual soul. After all, this is the great argument for trying to do good. To make a man happy and contented here is right; but to show him the way that leads to a better world when he shall leave this present evil world, and to show him that his soul, which had a beginning, but never can have an end, depends for its happiness upon the blood of sprinkling, and its interest in the sacrifice of Jesus; to teach a man that, and to tell him how he can be saved; and to go to the beds of the sick and the pillows of the dying, and to tell them that there is a God, our Father, and that they may be happy here and happier hereafter; I say, the man that does so is entitled to your greatest sympathy, and the cause in which he is employed to most munificent and liberal support. We pray this prayer because we believe that the Gospel, which is the glory of God, is adapted to every order of the human race, to every want, and every necessity; that there is nothing in it local, nothing exclusive, nothing national; and that to the people in the purlieus of St. Giles's, and to the people on the plains of India, the same Gospel may be carried with the same results, because embosomed in the same sure promise: "My word shall not return to me void." And we pray this prayer specially, because we have God's own promise that it shall be fulfilled. He himself says to Moses, "As I live, saith the Lord, the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord;" and David, recollecting God's promise, which is the guarantee of the successful prayer, says, "Let the whole earth be filled with God's glory."

David beautifully adds, "The prayers of David are ended." When are they ended? When the whole earth is filled with God's glory. And what then shall be our case? At present we say with stammering lips and hesitating hearts, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done;" all having the under-thought that God's kingdom is not come, that God's will is not done. But in that day, when the prayers of David the son of Jesse shall be ended, we shall no more pray the Lord's prayer as we do now; then we shall say, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed is thy name; thy kingdom is come; thy will is done on earth as it is in heaven; our bread is given us, and our sins are forgiven us; we are led into no temptation, we are delivered from all evil; and as it began in thy name, Father, it will end with thy name, Father, again; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen."

LECTURE XXI.

1867.

“And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.”—DANIEL xii. 11, 12.

THIS is a very difficult passage, but we have no right to pass it by; and if the discussion should seem uninteresting, we must pardon the necessity of it, while we accept conclusions only in as far as they seem borne out by data. But my discussion will be less the expression of opinions of my own, and rather what I have been collecting during many years—the opinions and the interpretations of some of the best, and wisest, and most laborious men who have given their attention to this very important subject. What I shall endeavour to show now is this, that whatever theories of the fulfilment of these dates are held, whether they fix the commencement at this period, or at that period, or at some other period, nearly all concur in one remarkable conclusion, namely, that the close of 1867 is to be a great testing crisis in the events of history, in the fulfilment of prophecy, and in the experience of mankind. What I wish to show is that the best, the wisest, and the most thoughtful of writers on the subject of prophecy, however much they may differ in certain details—and they do differ—nearly all coincide in this, that 1867 is to be a great crisis; and that if all that some expect to occur at that period do not occur, then we are at least, as Lord Carlisle has expressed it in his work upon Daniel, on the eve of events the most stupendous, if indeed they do not usher in the very close of this

present Christian economy. We must carefully weigh the quotations here introduced, that thus we may be able to judge whether the data on which these writers have come to their conclusions be correct or not.

Elliot and Mede have shown that the 2300 years, which Daniel gives as one of the great chronological epochs, terminate about the year 1821 or 1822; that is, dating them from the march of Xerxes, and the meridian splendour of the Persian Empire. But a very able clergyman of the Church of England, who has written a work called "The Terminal Synchronism of Daniel's Two Periods," so far differs from Mr. Elliot. He thinks that the 2300 years, one of Daniel's great epochs, at the end of which, as I showed, the Eastern Apostacy, or the waters of the river Euphrates that had overflowed Europe, that is, the power of Mahomet, should begin to subside, began at the autumnal equinox of 433 B.C.; and if the 2300 years began at the autumnal equinox of 433 B.C., then this great period would terminate in the autumnal equinox of 1867. Elliot's opinion is, that the 2300 years mete out the taking away of the daily sacrifice, and begin the withdrawal of that great eastern eclipse which has so long overshadowed the light and the sunshine of heaven in the eastern world, and therefore that they end in 1821; at which date Mahometanism as a power in Europe began to be shaken to its centre, and its people to cross the Bosphorus, and to fall back upon their ancient channels in Asia, and to cease to be any longer a dominant, triumphant, and advancing fanaticism. But this writer thinks that the proper date is 433 B.C.; and if so, then the same great period would terminate in 1867, when, according to him, Mahometanism will be utterly expunged, and the cross will shine where the crescent now waves in triumph. But more than this; this writer thinks also that the expression "time, times, and half a time," which all wise commentators admit to be 360 years, twice 360 years, and 180 years, making altogether 1260 years, called in the Apocalypse 42 prophetic months, which is the same thing—called also 1260

prophetic—days start from A.D. 607. Mr. Elliot, and other writers, think that the 1260 years, descriptive of the great Western Apostacy, began at the close of the year 532, at which era Justinian invested the Bishop of Rome with supreme civil, ecclesiastical, and spiritual jurisdiction; they consider that at that period the Apostacy received supreme civil and ecclesiastical power, and therefore then took on its corporate form as a politico-sacerdotal system. But this writer differs from them; he says that the 1260 years do not begin at 532 after Christ, but that they begin at the year 607, when the Emperor Phocas constituted Pope Boniface III. the universal head of the universal Church, and the supreme and chief bishop, priest, and prelate of Christendom. If you take this latter opinion, you must add the 1260 years to the year 607, and you are brought down to the same period at which his 2300 years terminate, namely, 1867; and according, therefore, to this theory, not only will Mahometanism totally cease at that period, but the Papacy also, with its pope and its cardinals, and its whole ecclesiastical despotism, will sink like a millstone into the depths of the ocean; and the world east and west be emancipated from the incubus that has crushed and darkened it, and begin to reflect the beams of an unsetting sun, and form a portion of that great empire which constitutes the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. I must say I prefer Elliot's; but what I wish to impress is the remarkable fact that both interpretations land us in 1867, as a great dominant era, characterized by stupendous events, and involving mighty changes in the present constitution of things. The theory adopted by the interpreters I prefer is that the 1260 years which were to mete out the dominant power of the great Western Apostacy began in A.D. 532, when Justinian in his 'Pandects' gave the supreme authority to the Bishop of Rome. If you add 1260 years to 532 it brings you down to 1792. Therefore, at the close of the 1260 years, in 1792, the Papacy, according to the prophecies before us in the word of God, is to come under the judgment of

heaven, and gradually to be exhausted. Read "Alison's History," or any equally authentic history, and you will find that the great outburst of the French Revolution in 1792 commenced so overwhelming an onslaught on the Papal power, with all its dependencies, that from that day to this Romanism has been a dying system, exhausted of its chiefest vitality, and struggling for a foothold in any land to which it can have access; so much so, that I have repeated again and again the conviction, that I have no more fear of Popery gaining the upper hand, than I have of Mahometanism or Hindooism gaining supremacy. The Pope is on his last legs, struggling for existence; and the only unhappy feature, and the most unhappy one, I must candidly confess, is that the only nation upon earth where it is gaining power amid a section of the population is in this land of ours. Among the lowest classes, I know, from statistics which I could quote did space permit, the Roman Catholic religion is losing every day. Among the middle classes it never had a footing; but among the higher classes it is at this moment daily gaining converts. They serve their apprenticeship to gaudily decorated churches, some of which have been recently opened; and after they have been saturated with homœopathic doses there long continued, they finally hand themselves over to the allopathic treatment of Pio Nono, and become avowed members of the Roman Catholic Church. It does seem the most inexplicable thing that peers of England, illustrious many of them for their genius, their eloquence, their brilliant antecedents, their resistance of tyranny in every form, and their vindication of the best rights of this great land, should any of them believe the monstrous fables, and accept the loud and insolent pretensions of a system that is indeed found in the word of God, but with a brand upon its brow, its doom being pronounced even before it came into existence. But so it is. We rejoice that the feet of our nation are in the right way; the head, or the upper classes, may be bewildered; but the heart of old England beats sound and true, and you must not judge by the wavering pulse at the wrist of the few that the

beat of England's heart is in any other condition than its normal, its Protestant and Christian one.

Assuming that A.D. 532 began the 1260 years, what is next to take place? Daniel tells us in the passage, to which I ask special attention, as confirmatory of the position I am trying to maintain, that first of all there shall be time, times, and half a time, or 1260 years, and then there shall be 1290 years. In other words, Daniel says that 1260 years shall be augmented by 30 years more; at the end of which 30 years there shall be some corresponding event, which we have to ascertain. Now if we add to 1792, the era at which the 1260 years terminated, an additional 30 years, it brings us down to 1822. But 1822 is the terminating period of the 2300 years also, according to Elliot's evidence and data. Well, did anything take place in 1822 that would justify that period as a terminating epoch? Turkey, in the language of Lamartine, "began to die for want of Turks;" the whole force of that great system of propagandism then began its exhaustion; and from that day to this, even our efforts to keep back Russia have not kept up Turkey; it is at this moment in the pangs of dissolution. I stated some ten years ago that it would be so; and however justified we were, and we were justified in trying to prevent Russia from disturbing the balance of the power of Europe; yet, as I then said, our efforts to preserve Turkey would be vain. Russia has still a sign-board near Petersburg, on which is written, "The way to Constantinople;" and no doubt in the lapse of years Constantinople will be hers, and Russia will yet play a part in the history of the world probably unprecedented for a thousand years.

But Daniel also says, "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." Here is still an additional period. He adds 75 years to the 1260, the great era, or 45 years to the 1290. He mentions three great periods, all beginning, as we here assume, at A.D. 532: first 1260, ending in 1792; then 1290, ending in 1822; and then 1335, ending in 1867: so that, according to this theory, Daniel's

period, when he shall be blessed or happy that waiteth and cometh to the close of the 1335 years, that period, assumed by Elliot to be the millennial rest, would begin at the end of the year 1867, if these data be correct, and last during a thousand years of uninterrupted felicity, and blessedness, and peace. But what I wish to impress is that, according to both theories, 1867 evolves as the year of stupendous changes. And it is very remarkable, too, as additional confirmation of this, that Fines Clinton, an able chronologist, has shown, that the vulgar Christian era began about the year of the world 4138; and that the real birth of the Saviour took place A. M. 4132, which is also the true A. D.: this is also the opinion of the Rev. R. C. Shimeall in his able work; and that in the course of a few years more we shall arrive at the close of the sixth thousand, and at the commencement of the seventh thousand year of the world. It is interesting to show in connection with this the universal belief among Jews and Gentiles, Rabbinists, Talmudists, and Fathers, that the seventh thousand year of the world is to correspond to the seventh day of the week; six days the working week, and the seventh day the Sabbath-day rest; 6000 years for the working world week, and the 7000th year to be what the apostle describes as the rest, or the *σαββατισμὸς*, that remaineth for the people of God.

The following quotations so far seem to authenticate and vindicate this conclusion. We must take these of course for what they are worth: First, Lady Hester Stanhope, in a letter from Syria to her physician, in the year 1827, says, "All those who come may go back in the Turkish year, 1245." And the physician adds, in a note, "It would appear from this, that Lady Hester Stanhope expected the accomplishment of some great event in the year of the Hegira, 1245. The Hegira dates our year 622, add 1245 to 622, and we have the year when she expected some stupendous event, 1867." This is not correct. The Turkish year is several days shorter than ours. It merely proves that the Turks anticipate the end of their encampment at a period then future. The late Edward Irving, deeply deceived in many things, extravagant in more, but a man of splendid genius, of un-

questionable piety, the victim of a belief that everybody was good and great, and incapable of a suspicion that anybody could deceive—said, “Not only amongst the Turks in Europe, but all over the East, the Mahometan power is wasting away; and like all doomed things begins to be conscious of its approaching end: insomuch that they say the Ottoman Porte is paralysed with prophecies of its speedy ruin. ‘Is it not so written,’ the Turks say, ‘in your Christian book, that our religion is to come to an end within forty years?’ And what is very remarkable, a friend of mine, who travelled lately into central Africa, and stood on the Himalaya mountains in India, by the holy pool, where never Christian had dwelt before, found there also an expectation of a religion from the west which in the space of forty years was to possess the earth, remarks which they made to me with their own lips.” Now the African traveller or friend, to whom he refers, was Major Denham or Captain Clapperton; they were in Africa in the year 1823: and 40 years added to this would bring us down to 1863. Again in another part of his book he says, “At the end of the 1335 days of Daniel, or in the year 1867, which is 42 years from the time when I now write, the period of blessedness shall begin, and the resurrection of the righteous shall then take place.” Mr. Cunningham, of Lainshaw, a man of profound research into prophecy, writing in the year 1837, says, “if the whole of the evidence which I adduce be considered, and carefully weighed, we are at that time, a little more than 29 years and two months from the end of Daniel’s 1335 years;” that is, they will expire in the year 1867. The author of a very able and elaborate treatise, called “The Seventh Vial,” writes thus upon the same subject: “No sooner had the period of judgment passed over Europe from 1789 to 1815 ended, than the ancient landmarks were restored. Where is the promise of his coming? came to be the universal cry. He points to the year 1865, “when, according to Daniel, a blessed era shall begin, the millennium be ushered in, and the complete destruction of Antichrist shall then take place. We are,” says that writer, “on the eve of the long anticipated Sabbath of rest and blessedness.” And the late

Reverend Edward Bickersteth, one of the most able, pious, and spiritually-minded men I ever knew; and I have listened to him as a pupil with profit and delight many a time, and derived from his works some of my best and most precious information—says, “If we reckon the 2300 days in Daniel from Ezra’s commission, B.C. 457, they would expire in 1843; but if we reckon them as we should, from the last cleansing of Nehemiah in B.C. 433, then they expire in 1867, which I conceive to be the period of the restoration of the Jewish nation, the cleansing of the sanctuary, and the preparations for the millennial dawn and sunshine.” I shall quote, lastly, from one with whose sentiments in some things I do not agree, Bishop Russell, a Scottish bishop; he writes especially upon the idea, that the 7000th year, would be the seventh millenary, or millennial rest of the world; and he makes the following most important remarks: “The tradition that the earth, as well as the religious state of its inhabitants, is to undergo a great change at the end of 6000 years, has been found in the writings of Pagans, Jews, and Christians; because six days were employed by Almighty God in the creation of the globe, after which he rested on the seventh; and as with him one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, it was concluded by the Cabalists and Jews, that the world was to continue 6000 years; and on the conclusion of this period there would succeed a Sabbath of a thousand years of corresponding length, a millennium of rest and of peace. This idea has been traced in the Sybilline oracles, in the poems of Hesiod, in Plato, and prevailed long before the birth of Christ, relative to a momentous change which is supposed to await the earth after a period not exceeding 6000 years. We find this expectation expressed by the Chaldeans, the Persians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans; orators, poets, philosophers; and the only difficulty we experience in the examination of the records collected from the literature of ages is to account for so great unanimity of sentiment, where we cannot discover any source of in-

formation or any authority which so many different writers would consent to acknowledge for a conclusion so remarkable." And he adds, "Whatever might be the origin of this anticipation so fondly cherished by Jew and Pagan, before the advent of our Saviour, in regard to a happy change in the constitution of things, it is manifest that the hope of such a consummation was not superseded by Christ's residence upon the earth, and the many promises which he made to his disciples in relation to a more perfect state of existence hereafter: on the contrary, the first Christians looked with a more earnest desire for the new heavens and the new earth promised to their fathers; and connected this expectation too with the ancient hope that this globe was to undergo a material change at the end of 6000 years, throwing off all its imperfections, which had arisen from the guilt of its inhabitants, and being then made to be the habitation of justice, benevolence, and purity, during a millennium of a thousand years, the Sabbath of this terrestrial world." I may just add that a poet—if one may take a poet's testimony for anything, and sometimes the deep insight of the poet is truer than the logic of the philosopher—the poet of our firesides, the most beautiful and instructive of all, I mean Cowper, says,—

"The groans of nature in this nether world,
Which heaven has heard for ages have an end,
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
Whose fire was kindled at the prophet's lamp,
The time of rest, the promised Sabbath comes.
Six thousand years of sorrow have wellnigh
Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world; and what remains,
Of this tempestuous state of human things,
Is merely as the working of the sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest:
For He, whose car the winds are, and the clouds
The dust that waits upon His sultry march,
When sin hath moved Him, and His wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious in His chariot paved with love;
And what His storms have blasted and defaced,
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair."

Mr. Scott, a very able writer upon prophecy, states, in his 'Outlines of Prophecy,'—"The whole six days' work of creation typifies the whole six thousand years of the work of redemption; and the seventh day, or Sabbath of God, is the type of that seventh thousand year of redemption, the millenium or sabbatism, that first day, as it were, of universal joy and praise to Christ. Almost all writers on prophecy agree that the prophetic dates given us terminate between this present time and the year 1867."

I have given these extracts from a few of many reflecting writers, all of whom lean to one conclusion,—that the seventh thousand year of the world is to be its millennial rest; and I have shown that, if the chronology of Mr. Fines Clinton, Shimeall, Saville, and other chronologists be correct, and it is most probably so, we are within eight years of the close of the sixth thousand year, and therefore, if these dates be right, within eight years of the commencement of what all these writers hope is the everlasting rest, the dawn of heaven, the millennial blessedness of the people of God; when all tears shall be dried—when all sorrows shall cease—when death shall die—and when Christ shall shine before his ancients gloriously; and this world shall enjoy that rest which has been foretold by prophets, celebrated by poets, anticipated by saints, and declared by an apostle to be the Sabbath-rest that remaineth for the people of God.

These are the data, on which each can form his own conclusions. I do not venture to dogmatise—I do not attempt to dictate—I do not presume to decide. I have shown that the best and ablest Christian students are all agreed that 1867 is an era fraught with gigantic issues; that some think it is the commencement of the millennial rest; others think it is the destruction of all the errors whose roots are struck deep into our world, and the universal spread of the empire of the Prince of Peace. If these things be probably so, we look at Europe, at this moment, with intense and awful interest. No one can reflect upon the last ten years without seeing that they have been ten years of unprecedented events

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in the history of the world and of mankind. No one can look upon Europe at this moment without feeling that it is scarcely a sleeping volcano: Russia is coming from its slumbers; Germany is aroused to its very heart; the proud and victorious Napoleon is so far alive to the cause of righteousness, and liberty, and peace; and our own country employs all the genius of its statesmen, of every side and every party, to stave off the tides of war from touching our own peaceful shores;—and yet all things lead us to fear that we shall not finally (though for a season we may) escape the terrible conflict, while prophecy leads us to hope that England will be spared in the wreck of nations. Her banners may be torn; but she will survive, for she separated at the great Reformation, from the Ten Kingdoms of the Papacy that are now coming under the judgments of Heaven: and I believe, therefore—and I am refreshed and delighted while I express the belief—that old England's sun will have no western setting in the horizon till its beams mingle with the beams of that Sun, beneath whose wings is healing, and in whose presence there is light and liberty for the nations of the earth. But what does all this teach us now? Suppose I had proved to you, to demonstration, that 1867 were to close this present era. Some will say, Oh! then we had better not insure our lives—we had better not take leases—we had better do nothing; but fling everything off, and let society go to ruin. I say, No. What is the Lord's command? "Occupy till I come." What is the condition of the people when he comes? "Two shall be grinding in a mill; the one shall be taken," that is, the one who is a Christian, "and the other left." What does that teach us? Duty. Our duties are determined by God's plain precepts: they are not to be modified by any of his prophecies, however clear. The prophecy I read for comfort—the precept I read for direction. And, therefore, when people say, we act inconsistently—as it was said not very long ago by caricaturists and others in the papers—that, because I took the lease of a house, therefore I did not believe these conclusions, I answer

that if I thought it would be for my interest or advantage, or the advantage of my family, I would take a house for a hundred years' lease to-morrow. I have nothing to do with prophecy in determining my every-day duties—they are to be decided by God's precepts and to be guided by common sense. If I believed that 1867 were to end the present economy of things, I should no less have my hand and head busy in my work. I would encourage the soldier to appear in the ranks, the merchant in his counting-house, the senator in the parliament, and every man to stand at his post; for the post of duty is always the place of safety before God and in the sight of all mankind. But whilst our hands should be active in duty, our hearts should be more than ever in heaven. Some people say, Oh! how shocking, how terrible, that the world is to end! Why, how shocking, how terrible, that you may die to-morrow! I might say, how shocking, that the aged of 60 have only some 10 years to live. Death, to the individual, is just as solemn as the close of this economy to the whole world: but there is nothing shocking in it. Our Saviour does not so construe it; for what does he say? "When ye see these things begin to come to pass." What! be terrified—be alarmed—resign your duties? No, no, no. The Bible is too rich in common-sense: "LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH." And who can possibly regret the probable nearness of such a consummation? What will it be? 'The end of sin—the emancipation of the oppressed—the extinction of war—the return of earth's ancient glory—the restoration of all the blessedness we have lost—a peace that passeth understanding—no more quarrels, no more misapprehensions, no more sins, no more sorrows. Instead of dreading the advent of so glorious an epoch, with all our hearts we should pray, as from the heart I do, "Come, Lord Jesus; yea, come quickly."

LECTURE XXII.

THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH.

The Germans call a burial-ground "God's Acre." The prophet describes its harvest in these words—

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."—DANIEL xii. 2.

THIS is one of the things coming on the earth. The resurrection of the dead is the corollary of the resurrection of Christ; the first fruits of them that sleep. I need scarcely add, the resurrection of the dead was never dreamt of by the heathen. Even those who believed in the immortality of the soul never ventured to anticipate the restoration of the body. When Paul preached at Athens to the most enlightened and cultivated audience that ever listened to a sermon, the idea of the resurrection of the dead seemed so utterly untenable, that they, like philosophers, laughed to scorn the eloquent but fearless preacher of it. This being so, it is evident that the doctrine is not the discovery of man, nor the guess of transcendent genius; but simply and wholly the revelation of God. We are indebted to the disclosures of the New Testament and the prophecies of the Old for this great truth, that the body is immortal just as truly as the soul.

We are very prone to lose sight of this doctrine; and justly impressed with the importance and magnificence of the soul's safety, we give up the body as if Satan had justly earned it, and had an indefeasible right to its possession. But that is not so. If it be true that the dead in Christ shall rise, then we may look forward to that blessed hope just as truly, and with as rich consolation, as that with which we look upward to the assur-

ance that "absent from the body we shall be present with the Lord." And certainly there is a feeling in human nature that makes one wonder the heathen never guessed it. The thought is most withering, if it be true, that the face that gladdened our home with its sunshine has gone into the shadow of the grave for ever; that the accents that were music to our ear are hushed for ever; that the dear friend that we took counsel and walked to the house of God together with we shall never see again; or if we come into contact with him, it will be in a spiritual, disembodied state, of which we have now no just or real conception. But when we read in the Bible that the body is merely resting like raiment folded up in that great wardrobe of humanity, the grave; that it is there superintended by Him that made it, just as the soul is superintended in heaven, and that there is not an atom of its dust that shall not again rise; new light is cast upon the grave, new splendours upon the hopes of the Christian; and he feels that those snatched from him on this side the grave he shall meet again, and know even as he is known.

Now in trying to illustrate a subject by some few remarks on which I have often spoken and written, let me show first of all that the resurrection of the body is possible; secondly, that the resurrection of the body is probable; and thirdly, that the resurrection of the body, as the last step, is absolutely certain; and then I will turn your attention to the time of it, the nature of it, and the results of it.

The resurrection of the body is possible. It seems at first altogether absurd to expect that the dust that is deposited in the depths of the silent sea; or that has been scattered by the winds, and incorporated into the grass that grows in the field, and the heath that blossoms in the desert; or that has gone into other organisms, and going into them has constituted part and parcel of a wholly different and almost antagonistic nature; can really be re-collected, re-organised, re-constituted in beauty, in glory, and perfection. This demands, the sceptic would say, very great credulity; the scientific

man would add the abjuration of the first principles of science; but the Christian says, I can see the shadow of its possibility; and if I see that, I may be able to take a step farther, and admit its probability; and if I ascertain that, I may take a step farther, and say it is absolutely certain. What is the evidence of this possibility? God is omnipotent; I do not dwell upon that fact now—a fact, admitting which, we must admit all that is pledged and promised to follow. But is there now greater impossibility, if you will allow such a strange expression, in calling those shining orbs in the sky out of nothing into brightness, beauty, harmony, and order; or in lighting up the sun with his inexhaustible splendour, or in giving the laws that regulate all his dependent satellites and servants, while the capital to draw on is nothing; and yet the result is magnificent and gorgeous beyond all power of description and language to express. It does seem at least not more difficult to collect atoms that are only disintegrated, than it is to make orbs where there are none; it is surely not more difficult to gather the scattered fragments of humanity each out of its hiding-place than it is to create worlds, and angels, and souls, and bodies out of nothing. I cannot see that there is required a greater amount of power to collect the broken fragments on the battle-field, and rebuild them into beauty and perfection, than to create these bodies of ours, so exquisitely and artistically made, out of nothing at all. So far then it does seem at least possible. It is possible on this ground; that we see individual instances by way of facts, precedents, and prefigurations. Lazarus was dead three days, and buried; the fingers of decay were beginning to draw their outlines upon every part of his dead and cold organization. Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth." Instantly the warm tide of life circulated through every vein and artery, and he came forth and mingled with the ranks of living men. A similar instance is that of the son of the widow of Nain. So at the Redeemer's own death, we read as fact, that the buried dead of a thousand years burst open the grave

that imprisoned them, and arose and ascended into heaven. If we have one instance of a resurrection, I do not see why we may not have ten thousand; and the possibility is established by one instance just as much as by the countless harvest of the resurrection morn itself. But grant that the capital we draw on to accomplish the result is Omnipotence, there are no difficulties at all; it not only becomes a possibility, but it amounts to a certainty, if God has said it. For what is Omnipotence? It can do anything that is merely physical. There are some things that Omnipotence cannot do: it is said Omnipotence cannot lie; it is impossible for God to lie. "God is not a man that he should lie." But there is no physical result, however difficult, that cannot be achieved, if the capital on which you draw for the accomplishment be the Omnipotence of God. For what is the very definition of Omnipotence? Power to do anything in the world, anything in the universe, except what contradicts the moral laws that holiness has laid down.

Having seen that it is possible, let me show that it is highly probable. If the soul is to be rewarded because washed in a Saviour's blood, and believing in a Saviour's sacrifice, it does seem highly probable that the body that shared in its sorrows and its joys, its sunshine and its shadow, its tears and its smiles, so fearfully and wonderfully made, should, having shared in the sorrow, be made partaker of the joy into which the soul enters throughout everlasting ages. It would be a very sad thing that this body of ours, this wonderful mechanism, should be yielded to the devil; and that though Christ has redeemed the soul, Satan should have ruined the body, and be able to quote it for ever as a trophy of his success in Paradise. I do not believe that such a result is consistent with God's great law. I do not believe that a single soul in the realms of the lost will be there because Satan succeeded in Paradise; or that a soul will be lost because of Adam's sin: the whole ruin of the lost is a rejected or neglected Saviour; and the whole salvation of the saved is Christ, and Christ alone, all their salvation and all their desire.

Inferring, first of all, from the fact that the body has shared with the soul in its troubles, and that it should therefore share with the soul in its triumphs—judging from the fact that man is soul and body, and that the redemption of the one without the redemption of the other would be but a half salvation—recollecting, too, God's own description of this exquisite shrine, the temple of humanity; and believing that Satan will not be able to quote for ever one single trophy of his success—I hold that it is highly probable from these considerations alone that the body will be raised just as the soul will be redeemed.

But to strengthen this probability, we find analogies in our world that are very striking. I do not say that any or all of these analogies prove the resurrection; for if analogies could have proved it, the disciples in the midst of the garden of Arimathea, in an eastern country, where spring does not come in as in our cold climate—slight sunshine to-day, a shower of hail to-morrow, but where it bursts upon the earth at once with all its beauty and in all its blossom; would have gathered from this that Christ would rise, if analogies were valid and suggestive reasons, but they did not. Yet these analogies, while they are not reasons, may constitute prefigurations, and may strengthen the probability that I am now trying to establish. For instance, spring breaking forth from the depths of winter, and the flowers bursting from the cold and repulsive roots and stems; the seeds cast into the earth, germinating and growing up into leaf and beautiful blossom; the silkworm entering its prison, and emerging again a different creature; the butterfly in its chrysalis state so repulsive, but when it floats like a flower upon the air so truly beautiful, are all surely in their way prefigurations of the possibility, prefigurations and shadows of the probability, also, that a change such as we are speaking of from the contents of the grave to a body no longer corruptible, but incorruptible; no longer mortal, but immortal, will one day take place. The swallow returning by an instinct exquisite as if it heard the

footfall of the approaching summer ; all creation seeming anxious to burst forth into leaf and blossom, as if under some mysterious touch ; furnish a contrast between the winter that precedes and the summer that follows, not greater than the contrast between the body in the grave and the body in the kingdom of glory ; and therefore these analogies, so true, to a great extent strengthen and confirm what I am trying to establish—the probability of the resurrection of the body.

But I add what settles all disputes, it is absolutely certain. To a humble Christian, “ Thus saith the Lord,” is worth all the fine similes, the beautiful figures, and the suggestive analogies that poet can weave into song, or preacher can quote in his sermon. For what do we read?—“ The hour is coming,” and this is from the lips of the Resurrection and the Life, “ when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth ; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.” And in that beautiful passage in Thessalonians, “ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him ; for the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” Thus faithfulness has promised it, omnipotence waits on faithfulness to execute its promise ; and it is not only probable but absolutely certain that this mortal shall put on immortality, this corruptible incorruption, and death shall be swallowed up in victory.

Having tried to show these three points, let us inquire what are some of the lessons that are taught by this event coming on the earth. First of all, the great end of the resurrection is to complete the triumphs purchased on the cross. That cross has ransomed every soul that rests upon it for forgiveness ; and that resurrection has guaranteed that along with the ransomed soul the body shall rise from the dead and reign with Christ in glory. I have therefore not the least doubt that every eye of every believer shall see Christ, the

Son of God ; that every tongue that chants his praise from the heart upon earth shall chant it in heaven ; and that every ear that meekly listens to the preached word here shall listen to all the triumphant songs of praise in that better world ; and that we shall enter into heaven not a maimed humanity, but soul and body, and so be for ever with the Lord. In the second place, I look upon the resurrection of the body as designed to perpetuate the human race. If souls only are admitted into heaven, they would be angels ; but soul and body, as we have seen, constitute man ; and therefore there will be in heaven not angels only, but glorified humanity. If the body were not raised, this remarkable creature man would cease ; after the lapse of a few thousand years he would finally disappear. But believing in the resurrection of the body as well as the redemption of the soul, there will be in heaven and throughout the endless ages of eternity eyes to see, tongues to sing, ears to hear, hearts to throb, reasons to discuss, memories to recollect, and imaginations to body forth in all their magnificence, the ever-budding glories of everlasting day.

This resurrection of the body is intended to show forth the glory and the greatness of the victory obtained over death by our blessed Lord ; when the grave received him, as it supposed, as a prisoner, it found it had received into its bosom its vanquisher and conqueror. Thus the greatest glory shall be devolved upon Christ, the completest blow will be struck at death, and sin, and Satan, and the grave, when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead in Christ shall rise. What a grand spectacle ! Some day we shall be startled by a royal sound that will ring from earth to heaven, and reverberate from heaven to earth, and penetrate all graves, and pierce the stony pyramids, and waken its echoes in the most sequestered cells of the weeping and the hopeless captives ; and the moment that sound shall be heard the green sod shall roll itself away from covering its sacred contents ; monuments of bronze and mausoleums of marble shall rend and split as beneath a mysterious stroke ; the ancient pyramids shall open their stony

chambers, and the proud Pharaohs shall come forth as humbly and obediently as the meanest slaves from the canals in which they perished; and not one human being, whether good or bad, shall fail to hear that sound. And the stormy ocean, whose waves have sung the requiem of many a gallant sailor; and battle-fields; and sand-drifts in the desert, shall all open and disclose their dead; and the very dust beneath our feet shall become animate; and a sight will be witnessed at that day I solemnly believe, more magnificent, stupendous, and impressive, than when God called worlds out of nothing into being, and said, "Let there be light, and there was light." I have a strong presentiment or impression, that each individual called at that day will hear his name. When Jesus raised Lazarus, he said "Lazarus, come forth." And there is something very beautiful in the thought, that the name that was given you in baptism shall be heard as an under-tone in the sound of the resurrection-trumpet; and that you personally will be addressed, and that you personally will feel this mortal put on immortality, and this corruptible incorruptibility; leaving behind you in the grave only what contaminated and defiled; and appearing no more in the clinging garments of corruption, but in bridal robes, in coronation dress, in the shining white raiment, washed and made clean in the blood of the Lamb.

When is the time of this resurrection? We are told Christ shall descend with a shout, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. The time of it is when Christ comes. When that shall be, or the day and the hour of it, knoweth no man. Yet we are told by the blessed Saviour that we are not to overlook, nor to be insensible to the signs of the age in which we live. Most people feel—you cannot fail reading it in every journal, hearing it in every conversation, noticing it in books—that we live in an age unprecedented for its intensity, its triumphs, its energy, and in some respects for its disintegration and dislocation in all its moral, political, and social aspects. Now I do not exaggerate, I am sure, when I say that there has been compressed

into the last ten years more than has been compressed into the last hundred years; and that things that used to take centuries to ripen them, are now developed, and ripened, and finished in a week, a month, or a single year. Wars, rumours of wars, are the features of the day. Ask the most thinking men—do not accept here the conclusions of a preacher, who knows little of political and national topics—but ask the most thinking men, and they will tell you, that all Europe at this moment heaves with hidden fires; that soon, and I have no doubt sooner than most think, the next shock of the great earthquake of 1848 will be felt, when the soil of Europe shall tremble beneath the beat of the feet of millions; and men's hearts literally will fail them for fear of the things that are coming on the earth. Take the last few years—dislocation of commerce, dislocations of party, disorganization of churches; kings seated, many of them on the continent of Europe, on their thrones, and doubting how long they will be the occupants of them; the nations, as if stored with combustible matter, and men afraid to tread too harshly, lest the spark be suddenly struck that will explode them. But what should all this be to us? Suppose the earth be convulsed; suppose kingdoms like ships on a tempestuous ocean be dashed against each other, or scattered like drift-wood upon its waves; suppose the kings of the earth tremble; suppose wars and rumours of wars multiply, till England's firesides become each a scene of weeping and of sorrow, we can yet fall back on the magnificent conviction, “The Lord reigneth.” The severest storm is nearest the everlasting calm; and the time of greatest trouble nearest the resurrection, and the restoration of all that believe in and love the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophet, from whom I have taken the subject of these thoughts, tells us in fact, that at this very time when those that sleep in their graves shall awake—“shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people”—that is, the Jews—“shall be de-

livered, every one that shall be found written in the book." And then at that time "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." If we be Christians, however much we may grieve over the sins and the sufferings of others, we have still for ourselves, and for them too, if they will embrace and hold fast the blessed hope, the glorious prospect of immortality and happiness; where there shall be no more sin, nor shame, nor sorrow, nor disappointment, nor grief, nor sickness, nor disease; but all things shall be made new. What shall be the character of these bodies that shall be raised at that day? They will be as they are now—imperfection, the traces of disease and sin excepted. I am persuaded that all that constitutes individuality, all that constitutes idiosyncrasy, all that we know as that which is the man, will be raised. I admit what physiologists state—that every seven years every particle in our body is dislodged; I admit that fully—but yet they must own, what common sense sees, that the man you knew twenty years ago looks and is the same man still. His hair may be whitened, the wrinkles on his face may be multiplied; the furrows on his brow as if they were trying to crowd his history into that forehead, may seem closer and compacter together—but still, some way or another, there is the man; there remains something that is his idiosyncrasy, and that constitutes his identity. Well, that shall be raised; all imperfection, all disease, all sin, all traces of decay, eliminated and left behind; and all that is requisite to constitute identity will be so complete, that the mother shall know the babe she lost in infancy, the father the child, the child the parent, the brother the sister, and the sister the brother; all shall know each other. Is there not also some suggestive analogy here? Do we not see everything in this world striving after perfection? We constantly see, as we look around us, that our earth, just like ourselves, is under a repressive curse. What does the apostle say? "All creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, waiting to be delivered;

waiting for the adoption of the sons of God ; to wit, the redemption of the body." Here is his statement that all creation groans and travails. Why? It is under a repressive curse ; and I believe that what we see now in this earth, in ourselves, in flower, in tree, in fruit, is only a dim earnest of the beauty and magnificence that will be when that repressive curse shall be withdrawn. God sometimes gives to man comforting prefigurations of what will be. For instance, who would believe that the exquisite rose in the garden, the loveliest and the most fragrant flower in it, is simply the common wild hedge-rose, cultivated by man till it attains that excellence ! What does that prove ? That there are in that wild hedge-rose possibilities of beauty repressed, that man can in some slight degree bring out, but which under millennial suns will burst into a beauty and magnificence that eye hath not seen, and that man has never before conceived. So we see in this world of ours everything at this moment striving after perfection ; the rock seeking to culminate in the exquisite and beautiful crystal ; the tree bursting into the fragrant and beautiful blossom ; all things striving after and stretching up to a perfection—as if Nature had in her heart some strong presentiment of a coming restoration, and tried to anticipate the era by now and then letting forth signs and glimpses of the buried treasures that are in her bosom. And how beautiful will this orb be, and how blest its inhabitants, when all sin shall flee like a shadow, and the light of an unsetting sun shall shine on it, or rather the light of that world which has no need of the sun, but where the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the glory of it ! What a bright and glorious orb will earth become, and what a happy and blessed tenantry will occupy it for ever ! I need not tell you that all this points to a conclusion I have tried before to establish—that the earth is redeemed from its curse just as well as man's body is ransomed from the grave. I believe in a resurrection of this globe of ours just as I do in the resurrection of the body. We have no more reason to suppose that the devil shall get this earth as

his prize, than that he will get our bodies as his property. It will then be a scene of surpassing beauty. At this moment it has glens, and mountains, and valleys, and landscapes, that show how much remains of its Eden magnificence; and that give token what it may become when all things are made new. When this earth shall be restored, and glorified spirits in resurrection bodies shall be its tenantry, the rest of the orbs of the sky that never fell, as they gaze down upon their recovered, once fallen but now restored sister, will not only say, but shout and sing—"It is meet that we should rejoice, for this our lost sister orb is found, this our dead sister world at length is made alive."

We may be even now in this world laying down the outlines of our resurrection bodies. Did it ever strike you that a man can almost be deciphered from his face? I believe in some degree with Socrates of old, that the face is to the inner moral and mental economy very much what the dial is to the clock. Is a man sensual, depraved, debased? You can read it on his countenance. If he a man of ambitious passions? You can trace the shadows of them on his face. Is he a Christian? you can see on his brow that is without wrinkle, in the expression that is without hesitation—in the whole mannerism of the man—that he is on his journey to the everlasting home; and ripening for a place amid the redeemed in glory. Is it improbable that we are now in this world engraving the outlines and marking the framework of the body that is to clothe us for ever; and that we deposit in the grave the norm of that body that shall rise to everlasting shame and contempt, or of that which shall rise to everlasting life, and shine like the firmament, and as the brightness of the stars for ever and ever? If so, may we seek the Holy Spirit to inlay our hearts with that inner character which will shine forth in our outer life, and outlive the grave, and reach its culminating perfection when time shall be no more.

LECTURE XXIII.

THE SHINING THRONG.

Emerging from the sleep of ages shall appear, in holy lustre, those of whom it is written—

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”—DANIEL xii. 3.

FIRST of all there is set before us here a personal characteristic, “They that be wise;” secondly, there is promised to such the blessed distinction, that “they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament;” then thirdly, we have a missionary feature, “they that turn many to righteousness;” and we have a missionary reward, “they shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.”

Let us first study the character of the persons, “they that be wise.” What is meant by all this? What is wisdom? It is not the wisdom of the world which regards progress, riches, greatness, as the main things in life, and bends all its energies towards the attainment of these; that is not wisdom: to seek as the end of life that which cannot give happiness when we have it, and cannot go with us when life terminates in the grave, is folly, not wisdom. It is not the wisdom of the schools that is here meant. Splendid eloquence, subtle syllogisms, beautiful and keen dialectics, questions that do not edify, discussions that do not profit, were the substance of the wisdom of the schools; and of that wisdom we have a verdict we are sure cannot be wrong. “The world,” says the apostle, “by wisdom knew not God;” and again, says the same apostle, “God has made foolish the wisdom of this world.”

The whole wisdom of the schools was to find out what they called the *το πρεπον*, or that which becomes us, and the *το καλον*, that which is good; and the longer they searched the less was their success; and hence the judgment pronounced upon it by Him that cannot err is, "The world by wisdom knew not God." The word *philosopher* means one that loves wisdom; but such wisdom never revealed God our Father.

Wisdom, the mark of those that are here spoken of, is something totally distinct from cunning. We often meet with a cunning man who is anything but a wise man. The tiger is cunning, the cat is cunning, even the dog has some particle of cunning, but that is not wisdom; it is the low mark of the brutes of the field. Wisdom is the choice of the noblest end; the pursuit of it by the holiest measures, and the belief of certain success in attaining it by the promise of Him who cannot err. Let us therefore see what are the elements of wisdom. They that be wise study and settle in their minds primarily the great question, "What must I do to be saved?" Now there is no question that comes home to the human heart with a greater and a more enduring emphasis than this; what am I? what is the end of me? Is this world my all, is its most magnificent hall my only home; and when I am laid in that house which is only six feet long by three feet broad, is that the end of me? If such be the all of me and you, the Being that made us must be a cruel monster; but if such be not the end of us, he that ignores the question, What lies beyond? cannot belong to those who are wise, and who shall shine as the brightness of the firmament. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God;" and he is only second to him in his folly who supposes that the immortality and responsibility of the soul are questions he may adjourn to the judgment day. They that are wise in the highest sense of the word will never make it a subordinate, but always a supreme question, "What must I do to be saved?" Would you call that man wise who risks his life in the pursuit of a transient pleasure? Would you call him wise who, when his house is dis-

solving into ashes amid the burning flame, saves his gold but forgets the infant that sleeps in the cradle? Would you call him wise who in a sinking ship, being a strong swimmer, loads himself with gold, instead of leaving himself free, in order to save his life from the devouring waves? In the same manner, can you call that man wise who gives his whole soul to this question, How shall I be rich? how shall I be great? how shall I become renowned? but who ignores or despises, or totally neglects the great question, What is to become of me when time ceases, and where shall I be when the great white throne shall be the only sight, and the Judge upon the throne shall summon me to give an account of all the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or whether they have been evil? You may determine whether you be wise or not by this simple test—what is supreme in your thoughts? I do not ask you to think of eternity as the exclusive subject, or of the soul as the only concern, but as the *supreme* thing. I do not ask you to despise riches, honour, learning; the very reverse. It is proper that you should study and contemplate these things. But if you so look to the things that perish that you utterly ignore the momentous realities that stretch into everlasting ages, then surely I do not speak uncharitably—I speak in the very words of God—when I say you are not among the wise, that shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.

Those that be wise, and look to this great end, will as wise men ask for an explanation and a solution of their difficulties only where an infallible solution can be found—in the word of God. Were a sailor who has lost his path upon the ocean to look for guidance to the phosphorescent lights upon the waves, you would say he was a fool. And so if a man is seeking the way to heaven, and wanting to know how he can be saved, you would say that man cannot be wise who neglects an infallible oracle, and has recourse to oracles that are human and fallible, and many of them deceptive. If you appeal to the Fathers, they contradict each himself and each the other, and none of them are inspired; if you appeal to

the Church, the Seven Churches of Asia erred, every Church upon earth has erred, and the Church is only correct when its words are the echoes of the words of God. If you appeal to tradition, it is only refracted and misty moonlight; if you appeal to reason, it is only the dim and dying twilight of a once splendid and glorious noon; but if you are wise, you will open the book that God has sent to be a light to your feet and a lamp to your path; and you will discover there that "from a child thou hast known the Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto everlasting life."

He that is wise will be in all his decisions in this respect eminently practical. There is no greater mark of wisdom than its being practical. How many do we meet with who are always dreaming, but never doing; who are constantly striking out splendid theories, and daily dying for want of daily bread! The wisdom of God is eminently practical; it selects an object, it seizes that object with all its might; it bends its energies to the attainment of it, by prayer, by painstaking, by the study of the word, by thought, by reflection, by inquiry. It seeks the grandest ends by the best measures, and in humble reliance upon the promise, "They that seek me shall assuredly find me." "The wisdom that is from above is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy;" and they that be wise are the exponents of a wisdom thus scripturally and justly defined.

It is said that they that be thus wise "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament;" or as it is expressed by Solomon, "like the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Hence the course of a Christian man is progressive. Have you ever noticed the grey and misty twilight as it tinges with its first beams the mountain tops or the church spires? It seems so feeble that the least intercepting object threatens to extinguish and quench it for ever. But by a law that no power of man can repeal, the grey dawn gathers strength, and brilliancy, and force, till the tiny

ray that seemed glimmering on the very verge of extinction blazes and burns in all the splendour and glory of summer noon. It is so with the Christian. At first it is grace struggling for existence, but it increases and spreads, and turns obstructions into aids. Did you ever notice the sun rise?—how first of all the great black banks of clouds seem to threaten total extinction; then the mountain crags intervene between you and the sun; then the very trees of the forest seem to intercept his rays; and if you take cloud, and crag, and forest, and mountain top into your thoughts, the impression would be, if your experience did not teach otherwise, that that grey, struggling twilight never could burst into day. But wait a while, and you will find that the very crags become tinged with rosy light; the great clouds are dissolved into rains that feed the violet that faints for want of refreshment in the glen below, and add to the volume of the streams that are rushing onward to the main; the very trees become shafts of flame, reflecting the splendours that they seemed at first to arrest; and onward the grey dawn will advance, until it melts into beauty and glory. It is so with them that be wise: they shall advance from grace to grace, turning obstructions into impulses, out of evil educing good, shining more and more until they reach the noon of perfect and enduring day. Take the history of a Christian anywhere or at any epoch, and you will find this is his character. Bunyan was cast into prison at Bedford; the walls were thick, the windows small, the darkness dense as night; but out of that lonely prison burst a ray that has cast its light upon many an English fireside, and made the Pilgrim's Progress not only a household word, but the admiration and study of all Christian mankind. St. John was banished by Domitian to a solitary isle in the Ægean Sea: it was thought by the world and by the world's rulers that John's light was quenched for ever. But in that desert isle, in that solitary Patmos, an apocalypse of glory swept before the mind of the apostle, that has been a light to the feet and a lamp to the church in all

ages; and if Domitian had never banished John to Patmos, as far as we can see, the Bible had ended with the Epistle of Jude, and the Church been without the magnificent and comforting book of Revelation. Paul when he visited Rome was cast into the Mamertine prison, or bound to a soldier by a chain, in a miserable room in the midst of that great capital. Jews and Gentiles came to hear him; and from Rome as an echoing centre the sounds of Paul shot forth until Britain heard their echoes, and the whole world began to reverberate with their glorious and conquering music. So true is it that the wise shall advance from light to light, each footstep luminous, until at last the light of grace is lost in the noon of glory. But it is no less true that even now the wise, that is the Christian man, influences and shines. It is a great mistake to suppose that any man can, by any possibility, be a blank. There is not a man on earth, however humble, who is a blank; there lives not one man in society who is not either a blot or a blessing; you cannot be a blank, do as you like you cannot be neutral; neutrality in moral character is absolutely impossible. You have, therefore, to take your choice, and you cannot choose otherwise, whether you shall be a blessing, limited it may be; or a blot, also limited it may be, and in an obscure sphere; but still, blot or blessing, by no possibility a blank, must each of us be. What says our Lord of Christians? "Ye are the lights of the world;" not, as some of us would often have it, the *lightning* of the world; we would all rather be the lightning flash that illuminates the world with its transient splendour, and makes the wide earth echo with the thunder at its heels, than be, what is a far nobler, more impressive and magnificent thing, the quiet and gentle light that opens by its touch the sleeping rosebuds, and covers the earth in June with all its riches of beauty and of blossom. But if you be Christians, if you be wise, you are now shining in some degree as the brightness of the firmament; you are now the lights of the world, leaving in your path a trail of beneficent and moral splendour

which thousands feel the warmth of, or are guided by in their arduous and struggling roads. The light which shines in a Christian is not a polar light, cold and icy; nor is it a meteor light, leaving denser darkness behind it; nor is it a phosphorescent light—the light of decay and death—but a clear, warm, genial, heavenly light, making firesides brighter, human hearts happier, leaving the world a better, a greater, and a wiser world because we have passed through it; for the least light of time shall never be lost, but shall be caught up and be fixed as a star in the firmament, there to shine with imperishable brightness for ever and ever. Such is the character of the wise, and such is their destiny. This destiny of grace will be completed when the dust you have left in the grave, quickened and renovated by the breath of God, shall again become the companion of the soul that has entered into heaven; and this mortal shall put on its immortality, and this corruptible its incorruptibility; and the whole company of the redeemed shall be presented to Christ, a glorious Church, without spot or blemish, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of heaven.

Such is personal character, and such is personal reward. I ask, are you wise in the highest, holiest, most practical sense of that word? Is the safety of your soul not the exclusive, but the supreme thing? Do you live chiefly for the future, or is your whole heart buried in the pursuits of this present world? I do not ask you to be sepulchral or ascetic; but so to pass through the things that are seen and temporal, that you forget not the things that are unseen and eternal; and whilst you sip the pleasures as you pass along which God presents you in the cup of his providence, never forget you are travellers and sojourners, looking for a city that hath foundations, and for a home that never shall be removed.

Let me turn to the second half of this interesting subject, "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." What does this mean, "Turn many to righteousness?" It implies, first of all, they that turn many to the knowledge

of righteousness. But what righteousness personal
eousness, we are told, which is unto and Lord gives us
that believe. If the great question be, what is our fitness for
the soul, the next, and only the next, must we sustain,
by what process shall that soul be entitled to enter of;
the kingdom of heaven? They that turn men to be
righteousness turn them, first of all, to the knowledge of
this,—that no sufferings which man can endure are ex-
piatory or atoning; that no good deeds that man can
do are meritorious; and that no effort that man can
make is recuperative of his lost glory, or can reinstate him
in the paradise that he forfeited by sin. Christ's right-
eousness alone is our title, Christ's atonement alone is
expiatory; by what He suffered, our sins are all washed
away; by what He did, we are entitled to a crown of
glory that fadeth not away. Let us never let go our
grasp of that cardinal truth in the Christian faith—that
we are already, this very moment, if we be Christians,
just as entitled to heaven as Christ himself is; that we
shall never be more and that we can never be less so:
in other words, that our right to heaven is not some-
thing in us, nor something done by us, nor something
purchased by us; but entirely, exclusively something
that Christ did for us, that faith receives, and God im-
putes. In other words, my right to heaven is some-
thing external to myself. We see this from the con-
trast between Christ and us. When Jesus died upon
the cross, there was nothing in him worthy of that
death; when I shall be admitted into the realms of
glory, there will be nothing in me worthy of an atom of
that glory. My sins laid on him and accepted by him
dragged him to a grave; his righteousness laid on me
and accepted by me shall lift me to a crown of glory.
Therefore when priests come to me and offer to forgive
me, I thank them, and tell them I need it not—I am
complete in Christ; when others come to me and bid
me do penance, I tell them, Christ finished that eighteen
centuries ago; when they offer me all the absolutions,
and all the good works, and all the merits in the
treasury of the Church, I thank them, but I must

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I have led you to the
the Bible; that truth
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When your own heart
ments you; when me-
es reproaches you with

memory as you turn over the
past transgressions; when you are cast down, depressed,
and overwhelmed by a sense of personal demerit; oh,
blessed thought! each can fall back upon this, that my
righteousness is not what memory, or conscience, or
heart can suggest to me, but what the Bible tells me—
that Jesus my righteousness is all my salvation and all
my desire. There is no comfort out of this. Try to
extract comfort from memory, and you will be most
bitterly disappointed; review your best and your most
splendid deeds, and you will find them no comfort to
you; but fall back upon this,—let conscience condemn
me, let memory condemn, let the law condemn, let the
whole past of my life condemn, here is my trust, here is
my rest—Jesus Christ my righteousness, the only and
the all-sufficient ground of my acceptance; that He bore
my sins, and I shall never bear them; and that He
obeyed the law for me, and I shall be entitled to all its
reward. And they that turn many to this righteousness
shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.

I do not mean to say that this righteousness as our
title excludes or renders unnecessary what are called
good works; but if you will only make sure of the first,
you may be perfectly satisfied that you will have the
last. "Whom God justifies, them He also sanctifies."
Where Christ gives us a righteousness external to us,

the Holy Spirit works within us a righteousness personal and internal. In other words, our blessed Lord gives us a title to heaven, and the Holy Spirit gives us fitness for heaven; and the fruits we bear, the character we sustain, or the conduct that the world can take cognizance of; all vindicates our claim of being found in Him, to be found in whom is to have no condemnation. By what process do they turn many to righteousness? I answer, not by coercion. No force ever made a man a Christian. No threat or penal law ever altered the heart. Conviction is the child of argument; impression that lasts is produced by truth; but never did Satan perpetrate a greater blunder, never did the church fall into a greater mistake, than when either thought that burning men's bodies could burn out their convictions; or that any patronage can build up a lie, or any persecution destroy God's eternal and inspired truth. Nor, in the second place, are we to seek to turn many to righteousness by a bribe. This is just as bad. A convert secured by a bribe to any cause upon earth is far more dangerous as an ally than if he were an open and undisguised enemy. Besides, people are not to be seduced into truth by a bribe, nor are they to be terrified into righteousness by a threat. There is something in man's soul too noble to be coerced into religion by a threat, or to be seduced by a bribe. Then how are we to turn many to righteousness? I answer, by the majesty of truth, by the force of argument, by the earnestness of appeal, by eloquent persuasion. "The weapons of our warfare," says the apostle, "are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan and of sin." We are to turn many to righteousness by prayer, by painstaking, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit of God; "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Who are they that thus turn many to righteousness? I will mention, as the chiefest and foremost of the catalogue, the preachers of the Gospel of Christ. No office is possessed of loftier importance, no function is characterized by richer dignity than that of an am-

bassador of Christ. But because an ambassador, how dutiful is faithfulness; because a steward, how obligatory is honesty, in bringing forth things both new and old! A painter who fails destroys a piece of canvas; a sculptor who blunders injures only a block of Carrara marble; but a preacher who trifles with his duties, and says "Peace, peace," when there is no peace at all, stains his hands with the blood of immortal souls, and will be called to account for the abuse and misuse and perversion of his sublime function. Among those that turn many to righteousness are the missionaries who go forth to China, and preach the Gospel to bigoted Chinese; who visit the burning sands of India, where so many a faithful missionary has sealed his testimony with his blood; or who wander, like the Moravians, to the steppes of Russia, or to the snows of Greenland and of Labrador; or who, like the home missionaries in our own land, go into the scenes of pestilence, breathe the air of infection, come into contact with all that is debasing, and all that is disgusting to cultivated taste, in order to preach the Gospel, and fulfil the mission of turning many to righteousness. Next to him is the Bible distributor. I know not an office more important than this; for after all, the sermon has in it the alloy of the preacher, but the Bible has in it purely the word of its author, God. The Bible is the granary; our sermons are the winds that carry on their wings the living seeds, and scatter them broadcast over waiting and receptive hearts. The Bible is the fountain, our sermons are but the streamlets that flow from it. Luther the monk became a Christian the instant that the man became acquainted with the word of God. In France, during the last ten years, more Bibles have been distributed and received than during a hundred years before. How delightful to know that the *colporteurs* were seen following the French army across the Alps; and as they descended into the plains of Piedmont, the Waldensian *pasteurs* followed in their wake, carrying to thousands, to whom the field of conflict was then a grave, the unsearchable

riches of Christ! I have such love to the church that Sardinia has nursed in her bosom—the Waldensian church, the witnesses during the middle ages; the bones of whose fathers are bleaching on the Cottian Alps, the sufferings of whose predecessors are unparalleled in the sufferings of any martyrs in the world beside; that I cannot help—I hope it is not meddling with this world's politics—often lifting up a prayer to God that he would therefore save Sardinia, that he would shelter beneath his wings that bright lamp that has burnt in the middle ages, the church of the Waldensians; and that the darkness, and the damp, and the chill of an Austrian dungeon may never quench that sacred light, which sent its beams across the Cottian Alps, and has served in no small degree to light up Europe with the deepening glories and the increasing splendours of the Gospel.

Thus they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars; their splendour borrowed from an unsetting sun; their position high above the tides and the transformations of time; and finally they shall reign on earth with Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.

These come out of all tribulation, and appear on the earth, and live and reign with Christ on the earth.

LECTURE XXIV.

LOCOMOTION AND LEARNING.

A predicted sign of the approach of the glory that is to be revealed on earth is thus set forth—

“ *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*”—DANIEL xii. 4.

So far these words have been illustrated and fulfilled in every age of the world, and on every acre of the earth. There has always been locomotion in the world ; there has always been increase of the great capital of sacred and of secular knowledge. But the words of the prophecy seem to imply that this shall be intensely, singularly, and unprecedentedly the characteristic fact ; and that as the world grows older, and the twilight of its setting sun grows dimmer, its progress over the world's area, and its increase in knowledge of all kinds, shall be greater, and richer, and more ample than it ever was before. Let me take the simplest facts of the age, and show you how exactly they seem to be the fulfilment of this prediction.

The first part of the prediction is that “ many shall run to and fro.” Now if I were not to specify a single particular illustrative of this, let me ask the most superficial observer if there ever was an age more marked by ceaseless locomotion ; or in the words of the prophet, a greater amount of “ running to and fro.” And the more rapidly that man wants to run, and the further he wants to travel, the more rapidly science brings up from its wondrous depths the provisions and arrangements that meet his insatiable thirst, and enable him to develop his existing and most characteristic propensity. Take, for instance, the ocean steamer : not twenty years old in its highest and mightiest sense ;

she lifts her anchor in the Mersey, or in the Clyde, or it may be in the Thames, and ploughs right against the teeth of the gale; seeming in her majesty—for she looks like a thing of life—to spurn the waters, and to tread them down, and to laugh at or play with the winds and waves; and in ten days she drops her anchor upon the shores of another world; and the living freight in that steamer has in its transit all the comforts of a home, all the luxury of a library, all the pleasure of a promenade. What a strange provision and remarkable fact is this! And when the Great Eastern shall begin its mission, you will then have another addition to our proof, and another illustration of the fulfilment of prophecy; when a whole village shall be taken on board, and carried at a speed that shall compete almost with our railways; and, till some venture to say, New York and London will only be five or six days' distance from each other. Count now, if you can, in addition to this, the steamships that leave the Mersey, the Thames, the Clyde, for all parts of the world, and set out from all the sea-gates of our empire; count, if you can, the white sails that like the doves of peace whiten with their wings the length and breadth of the desert ocean; and then see what is literally true, that the sea is almost as populous as the land; that multitudes at this moment are on the broad ocean that might almost be compared with the multitudes that rush along the streets, and that cover the green fields of Europe itself. Let us turn to another evidence; for I quote merely facts to show the fulfilment of the prediction; take that wondrous fact of the age, also not above thirty years old, the locomotive engine. Its speed is something wonderful. When its first great discoverer stated to the House of Commons that he hoped one day to travel with his engine at the rate of fifteen miles an hour; that House, which, like other people, grows wiser, and is not always filled with Solons, with few exceptions, laughed at him in blind incredulity; and they had scarcely done with laughing before they were travelling at the rate of thirty, forty, and, as some

trains have even reached, sixty miles an hour. And then that very provision for travelling, by a strange law, has increased vastly the number that travel and the passion for locomotion. The calculation originally was that the travellers between two towns by coach or canal are so many, and the provision made, and the hope of return, therefore, must be so much. It has been found that travellers have been multiplied by facilities of travelling; and that the provision for the thirst has stimulated the thirst; and the greater the facilities, the greater the numbers that run to and fro.

Turn again to that wonderful instance of the fulfilment of this passage, the electric telegraph. Were an old monk to rise from beneath his tomb in some of the old cathedrals, and to see what is taking place, he would think he had come into a world totally different from that in which he lived, and ate, and drank, and read his Breviary. If you had told a person thirty years ago that people hundreds of miles apart would talk by lightning, he would have smiled at you, and set you down as an enthusiast or a foolish and ignorant fanatic. And yet, what is the fact? That this mysterious whispering wire, as it has been called, is covering the bottom of the ocean, spreading over Europe, Asia, and America; penetrating even that centre of obscurantism, the dominions of the pope himself: and at this moment Paris, Petersburg, Vienna, and Berlin, can carry on a fireside correspondence with London. And the day is, perhaps, not far distant when New York and Calcutta shall be able to talk with London as one talks with his friend on the opposite corner of the chimney. There is something in this that so transcends the expectations of the past, and so completely responds to the prediction of the prophet, that I think no man can be warranted in passing it by who ventures to illustrate this text. "Many shall run to and fro." The lightnings are become man's messengers; land, and sea, and mountains, are no longer obstructions to his march; space and time are very much annihilated now-a-days; the sea is practically dried up; distant capitals are neighbours; and great con-

tinents are bound together into a sisterhood of knowledge, one day to be a sisterhood of sympathy and of love. And families scattered over the whole world not only communicate with each other now in days by steam, but in seconds and minutes by lightning. The action of the cabinets of Europe is controlled, modified, directed, by the lightning tongues that speak from one to the other; and reveals the wish or the will of the one to the understanding of the other. Now is it any forced construction of the facts of history when I infer they are the fulfilment of the prediction in this passage—"Many shall run to and fro?" So rapidly is this increasing that if you open that wonderful disclosure of man's wants, a morning newspaper; that wonderful disclosure of temptations to launch out into expense, or speculation, or charity, in which beggars of all kinds expose their wants; you will find summer tours advertised for Egypt and for Palestine; friendly visits are spoken of to New York and Philadelphia; excursions are talked of to Athens, Constantinople, and Rome. To have talked of such things thirty years ago, as ever likely to be accomplished in the time in which they are now advertised, would have laid you open to the imputation of the extremest and the veriest folly. So that in all these respects this nineteenth century is characterized by an extent and an intensity of running to and fro unprecedented in any other century of the world. Besides, by a singular reaction, the very knowledge that is to be increased, of which I shall speak presently, is the cause in some degree of the running to and fro; and the running to and fro is the cause of the increase of the knowledge. What was the railway once? A thought in a student's mind. What was the electric telegraph? An idea in the mind of an American. What was the ocean steamer? A thought in the mind of James Watt. Thoughts have thus been launched into facts; and what were at first the dreams of students have become the actions and the profits of the commercial world. What an encouragement to study! I do not believe any knowledge is worthless; all know-

ledge, of all kinds, is worthy of our attention. A cause of all this running to and fro may be that man is restless; and that is in some of its aspects quite true. Ever since man left Paradise, he has wandered about seeking the home he lost there; and never since has he got rid of the impression that he is not at home. To satisfy that yearning after a home he has recourse to all sorts of experiments. The very words of this prophecy, "Many shall run to and fro" may be translated, "Many shall run for refuge," "Many shall run to and fro, and seek earnestly or eagerly for shelter;" the word will bear that. "And knowledge shall be increased." There are two Hebrew verbs, and it has been a question not about the interpretation, but which is the true reading; the one verb differs from the other only in a letter; the one ends with the letter B and the other ends with the letter H. It has been disputed which is the correct reading; if it be the one reading, then it means, "Knowledge shall be multiplied, increased, or augmented;" and if be the other, then it would be, "Knowledge shall be flashed like the lightning flame;" and if this latter, it would be a striking prediction, meeting with a most brilliant fulfilment in the age in which we live. This leads me, therefore, to the second division of my subject, that "Knowledge shall be increased." Look around you anywhere, and enter into any department of knowledge, and see if this be not fulfilled. Take for instance geology. It has laid bare what has been called the stony page; it has shown upon the stratified rocks of the earth the foot-prints of God. It proves that five successive times God has interposed in the exercise of his creative power; we find a dynasty of creatures destroyed; we find masses of rock laid over them, once soft sand and now solidified, we find above that rock, without any connection with the previous race, deep down below, a new dynasty introduced, and fitted to the new temperature, created at its perfection, and plainly by the hand of God. Well, now, it is interesting that geology should discover what the Bible on the highest authority has said; not to

confirm the Bible, but to be to those that deny the Bible a presumptive proof that the Bible is true; that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And very remarkable too, geology, once thought by some to be hostile to revelation, has in its maturity been shown to be in perfect harmony with revelation; so much so that though Moses was not inspired to teach science, yet wherever Moses touches on the confines of science, you find that he either knew the facts of geology enumerated in 1860, or he was inspired by God. He did not know the former, but we are perfectly satisfied that he spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. Let us glance at astronomy. It has risen on soaring wings, and with its eye inspected, and in its balance it has weighed, the stars; it has calculated with an accuracy that is unimpeachable their velocities and orbits and distances. We can upset the whole theology of the Hindoo by predicting an eclipse; the very hour and the very minute when it will occur; the Hindoo stupidly believing it to be an interposition of one of his great deities. We can now show that those stars in the sky, that the poor ignorant peasant believes to be merely the gas-lamps on the ceiling of his bright home, are orbs grander, vaster, more magnificent than our own; and in all likelihood teeming with populations that never fell, retaining all their first and primal innocency. And we can show to demonstration the age and remoteness of these stars, stars for instance that Herschel has recently shown, which have just succeeded in sending the missionary beam that comes from them to this world. Stars have been discovered that have been sending light at a tremendous speed, for light takes only eight minutes to come from the sun; yet such is the distance of these orbs that rays have just impinged upon the eye of Herschel which have been travelling for millions of years from the source from which they set out. What a sublime fact is here! And yet these most distant stars are what? The mere thin sentinels of that vast host that is spread out like shining dust upon the plains of infinitude;

"For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine."

Again, what knowledge, for instance, of lands referred to in the Bible has been recently attained! Nineveh has responded—shall I call it?—to the magic touch of Layard; and has lately come up from the grave in which God said in Nahum he would bury it; it has come up from its grave; and in the British Museum it tells us at this moment, "Thy word, O God, is truth!" Babylon has been explored; and the minutest prediction of Isaiah has been proved to have its exact fulfilment. Jerusalem, long a mere picture in the pages of visitors who could not embody it, has been by that wondrous discovery of the day, which makes knowledge more palpable—photography—been set fully before us here. It has been made a photograph; so that you can see the very stones the old Rabbis kissed; you can see the very dust on which they trod; the Dead Sea, the springs, the Jordan, the mountains of Lebanon, all portrayed by the sunbeams with a faithfulness so exact that it is almost as good as if you exactly beheld them on the spot. And again, Egypt, that land of historic greatness, that land of majesty and of mystery, of meanness and magnificence, has been explored in a most remarkable way; the prisons, the palaces, and the tombs of the Pharaohs have been laid open; and very recently a tomb was discovered in one of the pyramids, on the walls of which are described the exploits of that very Pharaoh of whom we have been reading in the book of Exodus; the stony interior of the Pyramids thus testifying to the accuracy, the historic accuracy, not I admit to the inspiration, but, so far as it goes, to the historic accuracy of Moses as the writer. Geology shows that when he touches science he is right; astronomy shows that when he ascends to the heavens he is right; and that those who have objected to him as deceived have been always in the wrong. If I may deviate for one moment I would refer briefly to that remarkable passage where it is said, "God made two great lights; the sun to rule the

day, and the moon to rule the night." Well, it used to be said, This implies that Moses believed and thought that God made these orbs six thousand years ago. But when you come to examine the passage, you find it is very different. It is not in that passage, "He made two great lights, the sun and the moon;" but it is, "He made two great light-carriers, or lamp-bearers." The Hebrew word for *light* is *owr*, as, for instance, when it says, "God said, Let there be light, and there was light," it is *Yehu owr*; but when it says, "He made two great lights, the sun and the moon," it is *maowrath*, a different word. Our translators, I think by an unhappy oversight, have rendered the word "lights;" they ought to have rendered it, "He made two great light-carriers, the sun and the moon." And therefore the words do not mean that God made them; but that he gave them a new and definite mission towards this world; and made the sun and the moon to hold out lights, in order that the inhabitants of this world might see. So that wherever Moses touches upon the truths of science, he is, on critical investigation, found always right, and those who have objected to him have rashly and ignorantly done so.

Again, we notice another evidence of the increase of knowledge; namely, the discoveries made respecting the human race in every land. You recollect the old prediction in Genesis, that "Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Ham shall be a bondsman of bondsmen." That was a curse mingled with a blessing pronounced upon three races. Now it is not a doubtful question at all what these represent. Shem represents the Asiatic; Japheth the European; and Ham, or Canaan, the African; I do not now enter into the proofs. But if you turn to the facts of the case as set before us at this moment, Japheth now dwells in the tents of Shem. England is at this moment the mistress of all India; the most magnificent of the tents of Shem. And it is from this prediction that I believe England will not lose India; for the prediction is that it is to be hers. And again, we read in another passage that Ham

is to be a bondsman of bondsmen. Now what is the existing fact? The African is a slave still. I am not justifying the people that make him a slave; but it is the fact in the Southern States of America, it is the fact too in other districts of the tropical climates; and a fact that we cannot get rid of, and that even all efforts to prevent have only ended in promoting; that the children of Canaan or of Ham are bondsmen of bondsmen. You have therefore the predictions of old being fulfilled; and the more you become acquainted with the world, the more exactly you reach the evidence of the fulfilment of the prophecy, "Knowledge shall be increased." It used to be said of the Hindoos, I remember reading in books on the subject, that they were such a mild, amiable, and gentle race, that many of the newspapers of twenty and thirty years ago, and some, I believe, of the Directors of that day used to say, they were far better without Christianity than with it; and that when they became Christians it only made them worse. But what is the disclosure? That greater liars do not exist in the world than the Hindoos; that you cannot always trust them out of sight; that they are deceptive; and we have seen by recent events such outbursts of fanaticism, cruelty, bloodshed, and crime, that we wonder how any that knew them thirty years ago could give them such and so splendid a character; and we have learnt that Scripture has not exaggerated its portrait of human nature when it tells us it is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And you will find that man is the same in all places, as our knowledge increases. Let him dwell in the kraal of the Hottentot; in the snow-cave of the Greenlander; in the cabin of the Irish, in the sheilin of the Scottish Highlander; in the palaces of kings, in the halls of nobles; wherever you find him, and under whatever colour, and in whatever clime, and in whatever complications of political and social circumstances—he is manifested as the creature that fell in Paradise, has reduced himself to moral and physical ruin; but will one day be reinstated in the lost glory, and in happiness greater than that which he originally possessed.

I may mention another instance of the increase of knowledge, in respect to languages. It has been a long discussion, are all languages any way connected? Anybody that will read Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, will see satisfactory proof there that they are connected; and if you trace certain familiar words, you will find they run through all. For instance, the word *wine* is the same in almost, I think, all languages under the sun; and the word *sack* is the same in Greek, Hebrew, Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, English, and almost all languages; and many other words might be specified. And Dr. Wiseman, who is a very learned scholar, I mean learned in languages, has stated in his book, entitled "The Connection between Science and Revealed Religion," a book of great research and talent—because while we deplore and condemn his superstition, it would not be fair to deny him what is good, and right, and true; we may admire the eyes and spots of the viper, while we admit its poison and dread its sting, and call it a viper still—that it has been discovered as the result of the most exact investigation that all languages have affinities enough to indicate a common source; but certain dislocations that prove that some time in their history there have occurred in them a great fracture. Just go back to what sceptics make merry with, the confusion of tongues at Babel, and you have the great fracture which science has concluded must have one day taken place.

If we look at knowledge in all shapes and forms, we shall find that in all respects it has been vastly increased. The folio read by the few is now the tract that is read by the many. You will get as much information now in a penny newspaper as you would have got for a guinea and a half before, and that not very many years ago. A Bible, that now costs tenpence, once would have cost as much as the building of one of the arches of London Bridge; so much has knowledge in that respect been increased. Discoveries, it took years to make known, are literally flashed upon your minds like lightning. Knowledge that used to be thought too sacred or grand to be committed to living languages is now on

every man's tongue. I will venture to say that the Young Men's Christian Association in London knows more, and is better instructed, and wiser, than some of the old cathedral chapters or ecclesiastical rulers some three or four hundred years ago. And why is it so? Because knowledge has so rapidly increased. The embankments of learning are all broken down; rivers rush forth in the desert; and where aristocrats sipped deliciously, millions now slake their thirst, and are refreshed and satisfied. Then see, in the next place, as an evidence of the increase of knowledge, the increase of it in depth and in breadth. Sciences known long ago are now more completely mastered and understood. And then if you apply this to sacred learning, the reformers of the sixteenth century were better divines than the fathers of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries; and I venture to assert that the best divines of the present day know more of the Bible than the fathers and the reformers together. There is a great mistake about that ecclesiastical word "father;" when you hear of certain fathers, Chrysostom, Augustine, Tertullian, and others, you think of antiquity; but the true fathers of the Christian Church are the divines of the present day; and the babes and children of the church were the so-called fathers of the first five centuries; because we have all that they wrote, and our own researches in addition; we have the lights of science, the fruits of criticism, the discoveries of travellers, the disclosures of investigation. And their errors are of importance to us. When a wreck sinks in the Channel, they put a buoy over it, to let other ships know they are not to sail over that spot. The very errors of the fathers have buoys over them in the great channels of thought and knowledge; and they let us know, while we take the good that is in them, what and where are the errors that we are to avoid. So that, as I have observed, knowledge is increased in depth; and it is increased exceedingly in area or surface. Many years ago the subterranean population of London, those called the Arabs and the Bedouins of our streets, were the

greater part sunk in utter darkness; but now, in consequence of the action of ragged schools, they are becoming more and more enlightened. I heard from the treasurer of the Field Lane Ragged School, that twenty of these children, once wicked and worthless, have been drafted into Her Majesty's navy, and promise to be good sailors; they have been rescued from the streets, preserved from becoming thieves, and are now entering the navy, where I have not the least doubt, that these boys, so acute in intellect, so quick in perception, so intelligent, and having now received a thorough Christian education, will prove as fine sailors in the day of trial as ever trod a British deck. I remember that in 1848 this class of our population was looked upon with perfect terror; and I believe that, up to that period, there was growing a subterranean force under the population of London, that, if left alone, like gunpowder ignited, would have blown the whole edifice to atoms. But by the efforts of Lord Shaftesbury—a name that ought to be dear wherever lives a Christian, an Englishman, or indeed a man—by his efforts primarily, not excluding the efforts of others; and, above all, by the self-denying labours of ragged-school teachers; I venture to assert that a change has been made in the mass of the population that has raised it to a level we never could have anticipated as possible, or at all likely to have occurred so soon; and is evidence in its place that knowledge is not only spreading, but it is descending, it is rising up; and the higher classes will have to make haste, or the lower classes at their heels will very soon overtake them; and we are glad of it: the more that the poorer classes know, the more the rich will feel it their duty to know. All *prestige* now sinks in comparison of that knowledge that is power, exceeded only by that knowledge of God in Christ which is peace. And now-a-days, too, the Bible distributor follows the march of armies: the Waldensian *pasteurs* at this moment in the neighbourhood of Turin, Alessandria, and the other great fortifications in Italy, and are so far in Austria, are preaching the Gospel

where war has launched its thunders, and showing the way that leads to heaven and to happiness, to thousands ignorant of it. We can see, therefore, in all these aspects, how knowledge is increasing — rapidly and deeply—and how it goes where it formerly would not have dared to look. The walls of China are levelled with the dust; its countless gates are opened to the access of the missionary; and the Gospel is at this moment being preached in its heretofore impenetrable tongue by a young man, who, fifteen years ago, was in our schools, or, at least, took an active part in them, and sat, and was baptized, where I now minister. In those provinces of India where Christianity has the deepest root, peace has been least disturbed. I was talking with a worshipper in my church, who is the greatest living authority in every sense of the word on the effects of religion in India; and that great and distinguished man told me, that in every instance where was felt most the power of the Christian religion there was least of disaffection; and that Christianity had nothing to do in originating the mutiny of the Hindoos; and where it seemed to have anything to do with it, it was the indiscretion of the missionaries, not the religion they were charged to teach. I am very sorry that some great men are advocating in the schools in India what they call a neutrality; that is the policy—and surely it is impolicy—of keeping the Bible out of them. I asked that most competent judge, what he thought the effect would be of saying to the schools in India, You may have every book, but you shall not have the Bible? He believed that, instead of securing peace for India, it would rather originate trouble. Throughout the Punjab, with which he had intimate connexion, he said he never found that the Bible in the school in the least degree created disaffection. If you force it upon the people, that is persecution; this must not be: if you insist upon their reading it when they do not belong to your religion, that is intolerance; that must not be: but because you will not force them to read it, nor thrust it on them, why should despatches be issued

stating that in India there is to be no Bible in the schools? Cannot you let the Bible lie upon the table? Is it persecution that the master should say, Now here is the book of God ; if you will let me read it, I will do so ; and if you will read it yourselves, you may do so? That seems to be a duty ; and I do hope that, whoever may direct the affairs of India, he will not succeed (and this is not a political question, but a high, spiritual, and Christian question) in introducing into the schools of that land a neutrality which, in other words, is absolute atheism. We would not thrust our religion upon them, we would not compel them to read our Bible ; but surely it is the duty of a great Christian land like this to let the Bible lie on the school table, and to give all that will an opportunity of drinking of it living waters ; a privilege we ought not to deny ; a duty, I think, that we ought most faithfully and fully to discharge.

I think I have shown from facts that this prophecy is not only fulfilling, but almost fulfilled in the present day. We draw from all this encouragement to sow the seeds of truth, to diffuse real religion, and to spread the Bible. In doing so we are moving in the groove in which God himself has proceeded and gone before. Encouragement is given us to pray, "Thy kingdom come;" for, what do we pray for? That God would translate promise into enjoyment, and prophecy into fact. And we may live, or our children may live, it may be that some aged persons that read these words may live, to hear in the eastern gale the sweet songs of Zion ; and in the western winds the voice of reclaimed and redeemed nations. Methinks, standing on the Alps, I can already see Italy casting off the shroud from its face, and the grave-clothes from its limbs ; and feeling the warm and genial beams of that Sun that has long been a stranger to that beautiful land ; methinks, standing upon the Andes, I can see South America and the isles of the Pacific recognising the approach of Him whose right it is to reign ; and, standing upon the mountains of Thibet, I can see in the jungles of India,

and amidst the plains of China, multitudes joining in the praises of our God. Let us take heart; the Star of Bethlehem shall be the glory of the universe; long-crushed Palestine shall yet echo with the hum of happy millions; and the last lingering Arab shall embrace the Gospel of Christ.

“Till o'er our ransomed nature
The Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign.”

LECTURE XXV.

NO MORE SEA.

A great transformation awaits the earth, of which instalments are daily multiplying; one of these is thus intimated—

“ There was no more sea.”—REVELATION xxi. 1.

PROPHECY often states in the past what really relates to and is to be fulfilled in the future. The Apocalypse passes before the eyes of John as a brilliant panorama; he sees the whole sweep past, while he records what he saw as it swept past him. But the whole of it, at the same time, or at least the last half of it, is the prediction of things that are to be, and not the historic statement of things that were.

What is meant by the strange, we would almost say, startling, prediction, “There shall be no more sea?” Does it mean that God is literally to annihilate the ocean, to dry up its waste and wilderness of waters, and to turn it into dry land? There is no proof of this: we believe that all God has made is to endure for ever, all that sin has originated as its progeny is to be cut off and cease for ever. We find on referring to the original record in the book of Genesis, at the 9th verse of the 1st chapter, that God said, “Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas.” So again in the 104th Psalm we find God spoken of in this way, in language most magnificent—poetry that, were it contained in Shakspeare or Byron, would be quoted as a perfect masterpiece of beauty; but because it is contained in the Bible, literary men have no appreciation

of its beauties. He says, speaking of the earth, "Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment:" what a beautiful idea—the earth covered with a shining mantle, that mantle the broad expanse of the crystal ocean! "Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth." All this indicates that God made the ocean; and as God, in the very beautiful and happy language of a Collect of the Church of England, "hateth nothing that he hath made," but hates only the defiling taint that has spread over the beautiful garment, and stained it with hues that were not originally on it, we have no reason to expect that he will destroy the sea or anything that he has made; on the contrary, that the regeneration of the future will be the restoration of more than the genesis of the past; that whatever sin has done shall be repaired; whatever disease, decay, and death, have wasted shall be restored: in other words, Christ will come to our world not the destroyer of what he made, but the redeemer of what sin has made its slave, its thrall, and its victim. But if this be the case, still you ask, how can the prediction be fulfilled, "There shall be no more sea?" I will show you just by a parallel passage in the 22nd chapter what must be its meaning. We read in another passage in the 22nd chapter, at the 5th verse, "And there shall be no night there." What does that mean? If the earth in the day of its restoration, as we expect and believe, shall revolve round its axis, and if the sun shall occupy his central throne in our system, it is quite plain that there must be the alternation of day and night. We cannot conceive that those alternations will cease as long as the main laws of our existing economy continue. It is obvious then, that by the prediction, "There shall be no night there," it must be meant that all the

damp, the clouds, the danger, the uncertainty, the precariousness, that are the accompaniments of night, shall not exist under the régime in which the earth shall be placed at that day; but that a glory shall rise upon the ocean and upon the earth, so great, that there shall be no need comparatively of the sun and the moon to shine on it; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof. And in the 21st chapter, where he says, "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it;" it does not mean that the sun will sink and be destroyed; but it means that there will be a compensatory glory that will render sunlight as dim amid its effulgence, as a candle-light is dim amid the beams of the noonday sun. Thus when we read, "There shall be no night there," it means that whatever night has now of uncertainty, or danger, or disturbance, shall altogether be put away. Wherever there are the fruits of sin, mark you, such as tears, and grief, and sorrow, and suffering, there shall be absolute annihilation on this earth; but wherever there is what God made, there shall be reconsecration, purification, and adjustment. The prediction, "There shall be no more sea," is exactly the same as "No more night;" namely, whatever are the perils, whatever the evils, whatever the disturbances, represented by night and sea, shall cease in that blessed and happy day. For instance, in northern latitudes, in the extreme north of Scotland, I have heard people say, "There is no night here." You ask, How can that be? The answer is, when the sun sets, the Aurora Borealis—supposed by the most recent discoveries of astronomy to be connected with a ring round our earth, as Saturn has a bright ring round him; certainly not derived from the sun—shines with a brilliancy and a beauty that will enable you in its mysterious light to read even the smallest type. So in the age to come, when the seer says, "There shall be no need of the sun, nor of the moon," the explanation of it is given; "for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Therefore we understand that, as "No more night,"

does not mean the extinction of the physical arrangements of our system or economy ; so, "No more sea," does not mean the drying up of the ocean, or the annihilation of its waters, but its regeneration and restoration to that state in which it was when God looked upon that shining robe, and saw no flaw on it, and pronounced it very good.

It is a just impression that religion is not a thing for the sanctuary only, but for everywhere ; and that one should associate all providence throughout its varied chapters with all grace throughout its successive kingdoms. The subject of this lecture was suggested by reading in the newspapers, that the two worlds, new and old, were connected by the electric wire ; and by the strange remark of a secular newspaper, "There is no more Atlantic Ocean." That expression instantly suggested, perhaps from previous reading, this beautiful prediction, "There shall be no more sea." Not that I suppose the electric telegraph is to fulfil this ; not that its accomplishment, when it shall be completed, and the two great continents shall talk together, will exhaust this ; though one rejoices to see in it something like the fulfilment of the prophecy in Malachi, "He shall turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the fathers to the children, lest I smite the earth with a curse." Our children are the great Republic across the Atlantic ; we are their fathers and mothers ; and one sees in this beautiful bond of union and communion, as soon as it shall be achieved, if not, as I do not venture to say, the fulfilment of Malachi's prediction, at least a happy illustration of it that we do well to take notice of. But that the accomplishment of this great feat of science is not the fulfilment, I mean the perfect fulfilment of this text, is plain enough ; because, alas ! if we look at the Atlantic Ocean, that separates England from America, we see there indeed incipient bonds of sisterhood and brotherhood, and union and communion ; but without imputing anything—we see other signs if we look across a nearer and narrower sea. We see the ocean imprisoned within the excavated rock ; that im-

prisoned ocean made to bear upon its reluctant breast great ships, teathed with cannon, and laden with shot and all the apparatus of war; we see the ocean compelled to look up to the great heights bristling with guns, seeming, no doubt not intended, as if it were a frown of defiance to this isle, which is our country and our home. Cherbourg has to my eye no charm; it is the exponent of war; it is the memorial of what has been; it is the awful prophecy of what will be till the Prince of Peace come. But I confess the electric telegraph has to me an ineffable charm; it is the symbol of peace; it is the type of union, communion, and brotherhood; it has almost a mediatorial beauty; and it seems to speak from the mysterious depths of ocean, where it will one day sleep I trust securely,—

“ From either beach
The voice of love shall reach,
More audible than speech,
We are one.”

I regard all the discoveries of science as instalments of what will be, a grand regeneration, as gleams and flashes vouchsafed from heaven to let us know that the great Light is not extinct, and that God has neither forgotten us nor forsaken his own promises. I look upon it that this earth, in the beautiful language of the apostle Paul, groans and travails in pain, waiting for deliverance. Groans and travails in pain, what an expression!—in other words, our earth and our ocean are under a repressive curse; and the reason why it is not Paradise, is that the curse keeps down all the beauty that is in its bosom, and that it has not yet felt the consecrating footstep of Him who will bring forth all its latent glory. But in the meanwhile these discoveries, so wonderful and accumulating, like star leaping upon star in a wintry night, are to me evidences of those latent possibilities of good that are hidden in the economy of things which wait for God to say, “Come forth,” and they will come forth in all their grandeur. For instance, winter under its snowy mantle

in the months of December and January has under it, sleeping it is true, but not dead, all the glories and the splendours of June. So this earth, this world, is now in its winter season, frost-bitten and sin-covered; but yet it has under it all the beauties and the glories of ancient Paradise; and as soon as that summer sun that we expect shall rise and shine upon our world, there shall be no more killing frosts, nor chilling fogs, nor damps; nothing that defileth; nothing that can cause tears; no spring or source of pain; but every garden shall be as Eden, and every desert shall smile and blossom like the rose. I regard the wire that will one day connect these two great continents into one brotherhood as an earnest vouchsafed from heaven that God has not forgotten what a wreck and dislocation sin has made; nor has He forgotten what a grand promise of a perfect restoration yet awaits us. I look upon the incidental discoveries of science, steam, and electricity, and all that we are familiar with, and that it would be needless for me to recapitulate here, as provisionally connecting the two Paradises. Did this thought ever strike you, while walking in your gardens in winter, and looking at the laurel and the great sisterhood of evergreens—these evergreens are perpetuated through the winter as it were to keep open the path of the summer that has gone for its return again? So I look upon these discoveries of science as a sort of keeping open the pathway from Paradise that is gone, to Paradise that is to come again; showing that God has not forgotten us, and that this world is not forsaken by Him. I must say I dislike seeing everything in the light of politics, in the light of pounds, shillings, and pence. I like sometimes to view things in that high and beautiful light in which they will all shine and sparkle in a brighter and a better day.

Having thus explained my meaning, let me show you what are the blessings that I have said we may expect to come, and what are the evils that I have said we may expect to be removed, when there shall be no more sea. First of all there shall be no more war

in its depths between the tribes that God originally placed there. God made the youngest and the smallest minnow as well as the tallest and the greatest angel; and the one has on it as many traces of God as the other. For what did He say?—"Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that hath life, and let man have dominion over the fish of the sea." But the instant sin came in, it struck down into the very depths of the ocean as well as rose to the very heights of the air; and the moment it reached the depths, the calm depths of the ocean, it kindled an internecine war, so that the caves of the sea have become camps, the sparkling sands have become the dust of battle-fields, and the spacious floor of the ocean is strewn with wrecks and covered with the remains of war. But He that said once, "Peace, be still," and its waves became like infants, and lay down by his holy feet, will say again, "Peace, be still," as He waves his priestly hand over all creation; and then what shall take place? It is not my conjecture nor your guess, but positive prediction in the 8th Psalm, "All things shall be under his feet," that is, Christ's feet; "the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea." Here is the very first blessing that will be—that the fish in the deep made by God, set against each other by sin, meant to be under the dominion of man, shall be restored to peace, and shall again be subject to man; and the trout, and the minnow, and the whale, and the leviathan of the deep, the moment that they see man will recognize their lord, and hear his voice and obey his behests, for God has said it, and it is not a poet's dream, or an uninspired man's reverie: "Thou wilt put all things under his feet; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea." I do not stop to mar the thought I am considering by suggestions that will spring up about the sea being over-peopled; just as certain people, some eighty or a hundred years ago, talked of the world being over-peopled. It is all nonsense. It will be time

enough to consider such inconveniences when the event comes; it has not come in any sense yet. Whatever God has said shall be, I thoroughly and heartily believe; and the difficulties that are about it never trouble me in the least. The God that gave the promise will take care to arrange and solve the difficulties.

When there shall be no more sea, I hold there will be no more tempest and storm; and wreck and ruin, the consequence of tempest and storm. What heart has not often quaked when the wind whistled at our doors on a winter night, howled down the dreary chimney, and rushed with its outspread wings blackening the skies, as you recollected that you had a son, a daughter, a father, a mother, a sister, or a brother on the ocean, with only an inch of oak between life and a watery grave! Who has not read, and felt his sympathy stirred, by what David tells us in the Psalms, in language equally sublime as that I have quoted before, "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in the great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep! For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof." What an idea, as if the winds outstretched their great palms or hands, and lifted up the great waves upon them! "They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble." Who has not felt the sensation at sea of the royal Psalmist, when the ship lifts her bows as if she was about to ascend to the stars, and then rushes down again as if she were descending into the very depths of the sea; and who does not understand what is here stated, "their soul is melted because of trouble?" Again he says, "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." How just is the picture! Nature must have been in David's days as it is now; the same troubled, and disturbed, and fretful thing that sin has made it. Or if I may quote an un-

inspired poet's picture of a storm, if not like the inspired one, yet it is more expressive than anything I can say,—

“ 'Tis a dreary thing to be
Tossing on the wide, wide sea;
When the sun has set in clouds,
And the wind sighs through the shrouds,
With a voice and with a tone
Like an evil creature's moan.”

When there shall be no more sea, and these the prophet's words shall have become the historian's record, what shall take place? Not the sea shall be annihilated, but the winds shall be in sweet harmony with the waves; the ocean and the atmosphere shall embrace each other like loving sisters; both shall hear again the same voice that they heard in Galilee, and wind and wave shall render, not the obedience of an hour, but the obedience of a thousand years; then there will be beauty upon its bosom, there will be only music in its chimes; the gems upon its floor will sparkle in a new light; it will cease to seek to muster its forces and rise to the mountain tops; and the Psalmist will no more describe it as a prison, as he now does, but will see in it a department of the palace of the great King; for there shall be no more storm, or tempest, or anything to hurt, or convulse, or destroy.

“No more sea,” conveys to every reflecting mind another thought, and a very refreshing one; it will no more be the grave of nations. What is the sea now? The great grave-yard of the world itself. Many a family have some one nearly related to them sleeping in that sepulchre. We know that its waves sweep over and toll the knell every day of millions of the uncoffined dead. The fairest forms are there wrapped in the dank sea-weeds, and brave hearts that once were full of life now heave only with the restless waves; and whole crews of great ships sleep there the sleep that knows no wakening; and the very pine woods that grow on its steeps seem to me to join in the ceaseless funeral anthem chanted there by the waves over millions of the dead.

Now what an awful deformity of the ocean is this ! Endearment it is in one respect, for we have an interest in the ocean as well as in the village church-yard ; yet deformity in another respect, that the shining robe that God stretched over the earth should be made the shroud of so much of the dear and the dead. But a day comes, we read, when the trumpet shall sound, and a voice, to use the beautiful language of the Psalmist, mightier than the noise of the waves, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea, shall sound : and the oldest dead mariner in the depths of the ocean shall come forth when he hears that voice, as well as the greatest monarch from his sarcophagus, and shall join that august and sublime procession emerging from the depths of the deep, deep sea, and rushing up and grouping round the great white throne to hear unchangeable and eternal retributions. If I may quote the words of a poet again, I do so simply because they express what I cannot so well express. They are the words of a female poet, and she says, speaking of this trumpet and this sound—

“What wealth untold
Far down and shining through thy stillness lies !
Thou hast the starry gems, the burnished gold,
Won from ten thousand royal argosies ;
Sweep o'er thy spoils, thou wild and wrathful Main,
Earth claims not these again.

“Give back the lost and lovely, those for whom
The place was kept at hearth and board so long ;
The prayer went up through midnight's breathless gloom,
And the vain yearning woke 'mid festal song ;
Hold fast thy buried isles, thy towers o'erthrown—
But all is not thine own.

“To thee the love of woman has gone down ;
Dark flow thy tides o'er manhood's noble head,
O'er youth's bright locks and beauty's flowing crown ;
Yet must thou hear a voice, Restore thy dead !
God shall reclaim thy precious things from thee :
Restore thy dead, thou Sea !”

And then there shall be no more sea as the burial-place, the grave-yard, of the nations of the earth.

By this prediction, "There shall be no more sea," I understand that there shall be no more obstruction to the intercourse of nations; for we read that during the future rest there will be nations, and tongues, and peoples, and kindreds. Now we know well at this moment that by the sea (one might quote constant classic allusions if this were the place) the brotherhood of nations is disturbed; and we mistake each other's meaning, because it is so long before we can get each other's mutual explanation. This will cease when the electric wire unites the opposite shores. England and America, or rather I might say London and New York, will talk together just as Mary and Martha did at their own fireside; and I am sure the funds will not be the only subject of their interesting and sisterly conversation.

When there shall be no more sea, France—a little like the sulky elder brother in the parable, who did not like to see his sisters and his brothers happy together—will cast away the cloud from her bright face, dismantle her giant fortresses, fill up her basin into which the ocean has been entrapped, and join also in the fire-side conversation between other great nations; and one happy, holy sisterhood be the blessed result, not indeed of the electric wire, for that cannot be, but of the pouring out of that blessed Spirit who shall weld all hearts into one, and make all nations one family; and Asia, the cradle of our race, and Africa, polluted by slaves; all the nations, all the continents, will no longer

"Stand aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs that have been rent asunder;"

but shall constitute what they once were—one happy family, without the contingencies that overtook that family after Ham, Shem, and Japheth, the world's three fathers, met in the ancient ark.

Then there will be no more naval battles to deplore, no more naval victories to commemorate and to applaud. A battle-field is a very awful and a very humbling sight; but who does not know that war is not satisfied

with smoking hamlets, with fields waiting for the sickle turned into barrenness? It has occurred upon the ocean also; and with the noise of its waves and the roar of its winds is mingled the more terrible sound or boom of cannon, and the shrieks of the wounded and the dying: so that sometimes when one reads the history of naval battles, one is tempted to think that man seems anxious only to fulfil the terrible apocalyptic saying, where the angel poured out his vial upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man. If ships shall last to that period, if there shall be ships when this prediction shall be fulfilled, they will be no more what many of them are now; they will be the white doves of happy social intercourse; or in the words of James Montgomery, the Moravian poet, who predicts the millennial glory in these lines—

“ With anthems of devotion,
Ships from the isles shall meet,
And pour the wealth of ocean
In tribute at his feet;
For He shall have dominion
O'er river, sea, and shore,
Far as the eagle's pinion
Or dove's light wing can soar.”

I understand by the fulfilment of this prophecy that there shall be the removal of those obstructions that have hindered the entrance of the missionaries into the dark and benighted parts of the world. How long has the missionary to spend upon the barren ocean before he reaches his destination; and how frequently does he find a watery grave wherein to sleep before he finds a mission-field wherein to labour! Steam has brought it to pass that there shall be no more land to a very great extent; but this greater power will seize the ocean, and bring it to pass that there shall be no more sea. And may not all this be the preparation for that angel who spreads his wing, and hastens with the everlasting Gospel with a speed unprecedented, and with a success hitherto unknown, to preach it to every tribe and kindred and tongue? And

when there shall be this happy intercourse ; when " no more sea " shall be a historic fact, and not a mere prophecy, oh, blessed vision, bright and holy apocalypse that opens upon one's eye !—every star shall then suggest only the morning star, every tree the tree of life, every flower the rose of Sharon, every wind of the air and every wave of the sea shall only speak music ; pagan tribes that never heard of a Saviour, jungles that the sun of nature and the Sun of righteousness never entered ; deserts where all is desolate ; oceans on which the mariner sings no hymn, offers no prayer, recognizes no God, and reads no Bible ; homes in which there is no worship, and hearts in which there is no love, shall all be transformed at that day, as sure as there is a God in heaven ; and one song overflow all nations, " Worthy is the Lamb, for he was slain for us." The crescent that is still the symbol of so much that is evil shall wane into a thin recollection ; the darkness of India shall pass away ; Austria shall cease to be a dungeon ; Italy shall no more be a grave ; for in the heart of Christianity is the germ, and on the brow of Christianity is the prophecy, of a universal, a never-ending, an ever-widening empire. The harps of Sion then and the hymns of her joy shall rise to the listening sky, and be reflected from the ocean and from the earth. All lands shall accept the name and glory in the cross of Christ, and the baptism of the crucified shall be on every brow, and the palm of the glorified shall be in every hand ; and not a spot, nor a river, nor a sea, nor a shore, will exist, that shall not reflect the very glory of heaven.

Such are what I conceive to be the unfolding and amplification of the magnificent prediction, " There shall be no more sea." Now I know it will occur to some minds that we have no idea of the possibility of anything occurring that can produce this, except what they believe will be—the regenesi and the restoration of the new heavens and the new earth. But before that take place—before millennial suns shall shine upon our world—there will be, and we have reason from prophecy to believe there will be, vast changes, facilitating the inter-

course of nations and of worlds. God may have—nay, God has—in the depths of his own inexhaustible wisdom, means and elements of accomplishing these results of which we have no idea at this moment. To give some explanation, suppose I should have told you twenty years ago, that a day would come when a merchant on the Exchange in London should talk to a merchant on the Broadway at New York, and should receive answers in the course of half-an-hour; and that positively the message sent from New York at two o'clock in the day should reach London an hour or two after; if I had said such a thing, you would have set me down as one of the wildest dreamers that ever lived, if not altogether a helpless and hopeless lunatic. And yet it is almost fact. And may there not be then in the future, just as in our world, possibilities yet more magnificent than even the electric telegraph that connects worlds; and may not this very last discovery be but a feeble specimen of crowds that will come within the horizon, so brilliant that we have not ventured even to conceive, still less to comprehend them?

What lessons do we learn from all this? See in all the discoveries of science, in all the events of Providence, not chance, not man, but God. Here is a very wrong tendency in us all: we are all so apt to confine God to the sanctuary, to the sacrament-table, and to the Bible; but the instant we go out of the church or out of the place of prayer, then no more we see God; no God in the counting-house, no God in the warehouse, no God in the senate; no God, in short, in things worldly. Religion for Sunday and the church; secular work altogether for the six week days. This is a gross misinterpretation; it is a disastrous mistake. I believe that God is in Cheapside just as much as he is in St. Paul's Cathedral; I believe God is in your counting-houses just as much as he is in the sanctuary. You never get out of the church; because the church is not a thing of bricks and mortar, and stones and timbers; it is the company of God's people; and wherever a churchman is—that is, a Christian, for all Christians are church-

men—there he is on holy ground ; and what he does, if sin, is sacrilege ; and what he does, if crime, is done in the sanctuary of God. God is just as much in the facts of history as he is in the texts of the Bible. Merle D'Aubigné said his beautiful history was written to show what he has assumed as his text, God in history. I believe that God inspired the man that discovered printing, the man that discovered steam, the man that discovered the electric telegraph, just as truly, though differently, as he inspired the man John the Evangelist, or Paul or Peter, to write the texts in the Bible. This is my first lesson. My second lesson is, be ready, always stand ready—speaking as I do to Christian men—to avail yourselves of every vehicle of power, and to sanctify and consecrate it to be a vehicle of beneficence and of grace. Do not let the Exchange make a monopoly of the intercourse between America or India and England ; see if the Christian Church cannot make use of the mysterious wire. If the merchants of this country keep one wire for themselves, why should not all the Missionary Societies unite together and have a wire for themselves ? Thus they could correspond with their mission stations, and with their missionaries ; thus America could tell us what its wondrous Pentecostal shower is doing at this moment there ; and we could tell, at least that if we have not it, we are praying that God would give his Holy Spirit, and water his church till its desert places shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

And lastly, let me urge, or rather hint, another lesson. Let this new fact, this new medium uniting distant continents, or it may be a new world and an old, remind us of an infinitely more glorious medium of intercourse between that continent of heaven from which we were dislocated by sin, and this island of ours restored, and out of twain made one. It is fact that God sends down blessings through this medium upon us ; it is fact that God hears messages that we send up by this medium to him. It seems as if the whole idea of this were embodied in the beautiful and striking words of the prophet Isaiah, where he tells us in the

65th chapter, at the 24th verse, in words that have often suggested to me that very topic to which I have already alluded—it is God that is speaking: “It shall come to pass that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear.” What a beautiful portrait of prayer that is! Now, what is the fact? That we have communion with heaven; that the separated realms are now reunited. And, grand thought! you have not to wait at the throne of grace till others are listened to; there is no possible interruption in this divine medium; there is no misapprehension of our meaning or misinterpretation of our words. How shall you escape, what shall be your guilt, how grave your responsibility, if, with such a medium of intercourse with heaven, you fail to avail yourselves of it now, and with all your might? Then, my dear brethren, ask and ye shall obtain, seek and ye shall find; “For all these things will I be inquired of, saith the Lord, in order to do it for them;” and it shall come to pass that before you call, God will answer; and while you are yet speaking, God will hear; and the proof of this is, “Thus saith the Lord.”

LECTURE XXVI.

THE PURIFYING PROCESS.

"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."—DANIEL xii. 10.

HAVING endeavoured to show the fulfilment of various predictions, let me here notice one moral and instructive lesson for all. First, we are told that "many shall be purified, and made white, and tried." These are the redeemed out of every kindred, and people, and tongue. How delightful to believe *many* shall be so! The saved are not a tiny and a microscopic few, but a magnificent multitude that no man can number, with palms in their hands, and clothed in white robes, praising God and the Lamb for ever and ever. Every allusion in the Bible leads us to the conclusion that the overwhelming majority of our race shall be saved. Infants dying shall all be saved. Then an age comes to whose perfection all past ages have been contributing, and in whose glory all past ages will be crowned, when all shall be righteous, and they shall no more teach every man his neighbour, saying, "Know the Lord," but "all shall know him from the least to the greatest." It is a most refreshing thought that Satan will not be able at the judgment day to show one solitary proof of the success of his dreadful experiment in Paradise; not one soul will be lost because Adam fell; if lost it will be because he rejects the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven. All Scripture leads us to feel that they that are lost within reach of the Gospel are not slain, but are suicides; they perish because, dreadful criminality! they will not

be saved. The language of the Saviour is, "*Ye will not* come unto me;" the remonstrance of God is, "*Why will ye die?*" the magnificent embassy for all nations is, "Him that cometh unto me," whatever nation, kindred, tribe, or tongue, or whatever degree of guilt, or sin, or ruin; "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Then if every individual that hears the gospel is not among the many that are saved and that shall be saved, it is not because God is unwilling, nor because he is unwelcome, it is not because there is not efficacy in the Saviour's work, nor because the Holy Spirit will not sanctify him, but because he puts it off, or puts something between it and him, or makes an excuse which has no foundation in truth, but satisfies his willingly-satisfied heart in the mean time. Does not the Bible tell us that we have no power, and that unless God give us power we never can believe? I perfectly agree with that; but if that want of power upon your part be a want of physical power, then you have a valid excuse. God will not condemn a man at the judgment-seat who has a valid excuse for not believing the Gospel; that is equity, that is common justice. If you be physically unable to believe, you have a valid excuse. You would not think of blaming a stone, or a dog, or a horse, because they do not understand or do not believe; they are physically incapable of it. But you forget that your inability to believe the Gospel is not physical, but purely moral; it is not want of physical power, it is want of moral will. There are two *cannots* that people very much confound with each other. For instance, a thief in prison cannot steal; and an honest man cannot steal. Both these are perfectly true, but the distinction is tremendous; the thief cannot steal because he cannot get out of the prison; the honest man cannot steal because it is not his nature, or disposition, or will to do so. So your cannot believe is not the *cannot* of physical impossibility; if so it would be a valid excuse; but it is the *cannot* of moral wilfulness. The lost in misery will never blame any one in the heights or in the depths but themselves for their

everlasting ruin ; they will feel, in all the tremendous force of that conviction, we might have been in heaven, and we would not go ; and we are now in ruin because we set our faces thither. : There are words I have already illustrated that seem to me most striking and suggestive ; " Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." " Come ;" the olden invitation ; " ye blessed of my Father ;" God the Father the fountain of all blessing ; " inherit ;" one inherits the title of his father not by his personal worth, but because he is the son ; " inherit the kingdom prepared for you ;" heaven the prepared place for a prepared people. But notice the obverse, where he addresses the lost. " Depart from me ;" that is, continue the course you began. " Come unto me," is, continue the course you began. " Depart from me," prosecute the course you have chosen ; as if heaven were a centripetal force, by which the Christian is carried nearer and nearer for ever to Christ, and made happier the nearer that he comes ; as if hell were a centrifugal force, the unbeliever departing farther and farther, and his misery increasing in the ratio of the speed and distance of his departure. " Depart, ye cursed," not of my Father, but " depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared," not for you, but " for the devil and his angels." In other words, hell is not meant for any human being ; it was never meant or prepared for you ; and if any man goes there, he will have the awful reflection for ever, I did it all myself ; and nobody is to blame but myself : whereas the saved in heaven will have the thrilling reminiscence, We did none of it, we deserved none of it ; grace, sovereign grace did it all. . Such then is the distinction.

Now it is said, " Many shall be made white." This passage in Daniel seems to be the original of what we find in Revelation vii., where one of the elders asked, " What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ?" And his answer is, " These are they which came out of great tribulation " " they shall be tried and purified," " and have washed their

robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." I understand, therefore, by "Many shall be made white," many shall be justified. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience shall many be made righteous," or made white. I understand, therefore, by this expression, "Many shall be made white," many shall be justified, that is, acquitted, absolved from all sin; first a change of state, by transference from Adam, in whom we stand by nature, into union with Christ, in whom we stand by grace. Each of us at this moment is by nature born in the eclipse; we do not need to perpetrate some great crime to be guilty in God's sight; we are born sinners, we inherit a fallen nature, it is our connection with Adam that gives us that nature, and we aggravate our guilt by our own personal transgressions. But we are welcome and invited at this moment to step by faith from Adam, in whom nature leaves us, into Christ and his righteousness, in which grace and glory will always keep us. You are invited every one to leave the wrecks of ancient Paradise, where the flaming cherubim and the guarded gates are, and to put on, without money and without price, that raiment which you have not to weave, which you have not to make, which you have not to pay for, but which you have to accept as a free gift, and be justified through faith before God, so having peace with him in Christ Jesus. Such is the change of state. But there is more than that. There is not only a change of state; it is added that those who are thus justified, those who are thus made white, shall be "tried." Tried; this is the lot of all God's people; and you will find it one of the marks of the people of God that they come through much tribulation. In the beautiful language of the Apocalypse, "They came out of great tribulation." We sometimes try to flatter ourselves that we shall get through the world easier and more softly than our fathers passed through it; all that is deceptive; you may depend upon it, as surely as you live, that if you be Christians, you will have something to try you, some care to vex you, some trouble to

dog your steps, some reminiscence that you cannot get rid of, some vexation that you cannot throw off, some uneasiness on the pillow, some uncertainty in the hopes, some precariousness in the possession; some sore disappointment, some unexpected tribulation. As sure as you are a Christian, so surely God will try you, the world will try you, your own hearts will try you, and you will find that tribulation is your lot, but triumph over it is your destiny by God's almighty and assisting grace. Now, to show how Christians will be tried in the great tribulation, let me adduce two or three illustrations. First of all, some of you will be tried by adversity. We do not like the cold shadow; we would all bask in the sweet and beautiful sunshine. We do not like the valley of Achor; we would all like to be upon the mountain heights of Pisgah, or upon the beautiful table land, above the storm and the cloud, and all the ills that irritate and vex in this world below. But it cannot be. Some will be tried by adversity. It is a heavy trial to the poor man to learn this lesson; "Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow will take thought for itself." It is easy for a rich man to take this text, and literally observe it; but it is a very hard matter, and goes against the grain, for a poor man, who does not know where he will find to-morrow's breakfast, to take this text and to believe and act on it. It is also a very easy lesson to learn to say of other people's dead, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;" but for a mother to look upon the cold pale face of the infant that she bore, and to see it consigned to the dark and silent grave, and to say then and there, "Our Father, thy will be done;" that is a very heavy trial, that will test and try her faith to the uttermost. It is very difficult too to feel, and it tries our faith strongly, that God loves us when he smites us; that the blow of the hand may be very heavy, but that "as a father pitieth his children, so doth the Lord pity them that fear him." But if you are not tried by adversity you will be tried by prosperity; and I am not sure which is the hardest. If I had it in my power to give the option to many

whether they will take the trial of their Christian character by being kept a very poor, dependent man; or being made very rich, or very great; most would of course choose the latter; I fear flesh and blood would choose without a moment's hesitation the latter. And yet if it be very difficult to hold an empty cup, out of which you can drink no sweetness, it is much more difficult to hold a full cup without letting it run over; and many a man who has been raised from the low and obscure levels of ordinary life, to the high and bright spots of the world, has found that he has multiplied his enemies in the ratio in which he rose; and that his happiness has not increased with the degree and height of his social elevation. Prosperity will try us. How prone are the prosperous to become proud! When and what were the moments when you first sought out God; when you had the deepest and the most penetrating sense of the vanity of all below, and the magnificence of all that is above? When some great billow of tribulation had swept over you, and laid you low upon the ground. When did you forget God; when did you care nothing about God? when did you feel as if there were no God? Just when this world's ball was at your foot, and all was prosperity above, and all was smoothness beneath, and all was happiness and sunshine around. These chiefly were your atheistic and ungodly moments, and experience also. Prosperity will try you; often prosperity is sent, not as a proof that God loves, but as a test by which God would try us. And it is a very happy thing too that we have not to choose whether we shall be tested by the shadow of adversity or the sunshine of prosperity. If we be God's people, made righteous, clad in the white robes, accepted in his sight, He will send us just the test that is most expedient for us. That test may be very painful, but will not be so painful as the devil would have it, nor so protracted, nor so heavy; and it will not be so short, and so soft, and so light as you would have it; but it will be exactly what God sees fit for you; and the trouble, whatever it be, will not last one moment longer than it

has done its work. An illustration is supplied in the story of the goldsmith melting the gold in the fining-pot; he was asked why he always kept gazing upon the molten gold; his answer was that he skimmed off the dross always as it rose to the surface; and whenever he could see his face reflected on the bright metal, he then ceased to keep it on the fire, and withdrew it for its great purposes of currency and use. God keeps us till he sees his own face reflected from our nature; and as soon as we are like him, then he withdraws the ordeal and the tests, and tries us no more, for we are then made meet as we are found ready for the kingdom of heaven. Thus you will be tried by adversity, you will be tried by prosperity; but there is one blessed thought, that if you be a Christian, you will not be overwhelmed by it. Recollect the words, "These are they that came out of great tribulation;" they were in it, but not one was left to be overwhelmed by it; and however much, therefore, you may be tested and tried, you will not be left to perish in the trouble: but the trial will be removed by Him who watches over you with parental sympathy, with an omniscient eye, with an omnipresent power, when you reflect the likeness of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue. It is a precious thought that the trial, whatever it be, is never sent unless it be needed. How beautiful are the words of Peter, who was very much tried!—"Wherein we greatly rejoice; though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations;" and then what is to be the result of them? "That the trial of your faith, being more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen we love; in whom though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Thus we have seen first the change of state,—made white; or transferred from connection with Adam, in whom we died, and placed in Christ, in whom we live for ever: secondly, the ordeal through which believers

must pass, in order to be made fit for the kingdom of heaven. The result of it all is, we are told, they shall be purified; they shall be tried, and they shall be made white. There is a great deal of dross in every one of us; and he that knows his own heart best, knows how much evil there is in it. Some one has said we should never pray, "O Lord show us ourselves to ourselves;" and it is most just; for the most awful sight that would overwhelm and crush us would be an apocalypse of our own heart, exactly as it appears in the sight of a holy and a heart-searching God. The more we know ourselves, the less confidence we shall have in our own excellence, and the more we shall be led to appeal to Him who is ready every moment to pardon, and through whose intercession we have an advocate at the Father's right hand, "able to save to the uttermost all that come to God through Him." By Him and through his intercession we shall be purified from unbelief, purified from the alloy of sin, purified from all the remains of corruption; purified more and more, till the king's daughter becomes all glorious within; and the church shines bright like the sun, and fair as the moon, and glorious as an army with banners. We shall be made more than we can desire; the heart shall be pure, the fountain holy, the tree good, and all the fruits shall be good, and all streams shall be pure, and all our works and ways shall be the fragrant fruit of a new character and a new heart, and made new by the Holy Spirit of God.

Such is the prediction of the destiny of the saints. The reverse of this is the doom of the lost. "The wicked shall do wickedly." It is their nature. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still." There are two great forces in our world that seem destined to last for ever; the force of holiness and the force of sin; hell the culminating depth of the one, heaven the culminating glory and perfection of the other. And the wicked, we are told, "shall not understand." There is needed to understand the Bible, and to understand many great moral and scriptural truths, not so much a sharp intellect as a sanctified heart. It is most strange how

passion can blind the intellect, and prejudice darken it; till a man sunk in depravity can neither see nor appreciate moral excellence at all. We well know how difficult it is to convince a mere natural man of many of those simple truths which to a Christian appear so plain. And the reason is, that just as a shilling over the eyeball will shut out the grandest panorama from the sight, so a single passion, avarice, hate, revenge, any other evil, or stormy, or tempestuous passion, will so darken man's intellect that he will not see the simplest truths nor recognise the plainest duties. Orthodoxy in its brightest sense is as much the product of a pure heart as of an enlightened mind. By force of intellect we may master mathematics; but only by sanctity and regeneration of heart can we master, and appreciate, and live by the living truths of the Gospel of Christ.

In which category are we—in the category of them that are made righteous by the righteousness of Christ; who, while passing through many a stormy and tempestuous sea, are being made fit for heaven, and will ultimately reach that happy haven into which the surf of this world's troubles will not break, and whose waters shall never be disturbed by a tempest; or are we in the list and category of the wicked, who will not understand, and therefore do not understand; who do wickedly, and glory in their wickedness, who have no fear of God before their eyes? Magnificent privilege! we have the choice. Choose ye this day on which side you will stand. Oh, may many a humble heart say, Blessed Jesus, where thou goest I will go; where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God! Amen.

LECTURE XXVII.

THE GLORIOUS LOT.

"But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."—
DANIEL xii. 13.

I HAVE tried in a previous lecture to show what is the precise chronological significance of those remarkable words, "From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away," that daily sacrifice the burden of the prophet's prophecy, that until the time that "incense and a pure offering shall be presented among the Gentiles," from the cessation of the Jewish polity to the consummation of the present age; "and an abomination that maketh desolate," (for it is not *the* in the original, to distinguish it from that of the Roman eagles upon the walls of Jerusalem, when Titus and Vespasian utterly subverted and destroyed it); from that time "there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days; 1260 prophetic days ending, I said, in 1792; when the papacy began to be subverted, undermined, and destroyed; 80 additional such days, ending synchronically with the 2300 years of Daniel, in 1822 or 1821, when the great eastern delusion began to wane, as it wanes at this moment, and is almost extinct in the east of Europe; that there should be an additional 45 years, making in all 1335, ending in 1867; and then, "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days," which end the age, on the supposition that the dates of commencement are right. There, mind you, the whole difficulty lies; and if I were to assert that 532 or 533 is absolutely certain as the commencing date, then we could absolutely predict the close of this present Christian economy; but that we cannot do. But I showed, by collecting the opinions—not opinions,

but inferences and conclusions come to by the best and the wisest commentators, not only of this century, but also of the last—that 1867, which is a great closing epoch, whatever be the events that are to transpire, is an era fraught with gigantic issues the one way or the other. If the theory of certain divines of the present day, who are very able and very pious, be correct, then 1867 terminates finally and fully the Mahometan and Papal apostacies, the reign of wickedness upon earth, and the commencement of at least a new, a brighter, and a better era. If the conclusion of Elliot, and Newton, Mede, and Bickersteth, and others who have written upon the subject, be correct, then 1867 would close, in the words of Lord Carlisle, this present economy, and be the end of this present Christian dispensation. The difficulty felt by many is how I begin this era at 532; what is the nature of that system which the 1260 years mete out? and is the church of Rome (which looks very uncharitable, but we never can be uncharitable when we speak what is true, I mean true in the word of God) that dreadful apostacy thus meted out by the days here specified?

But at all events whatever be the eras or the dates, whatever be the commencing or the terminating epochs, here is the grand practical lesson deducible from all, addressed to every Daniel in Christendom, every preacher and every student of prophecy, every Christian in this age, "Go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." There seem to me three great lessons to be gathered from this prescription; first of all, that present duty is not the least diluted by contingent results; "Go thy way till the end be." The meaning of "Go thy way" is, Mind your business, mind your work, attend to your duty. Secondly, there is the prophecy, which we are sure will be fulfilled; "Thou shalt rest; there remaineth a rest for the people of God;" and lastly there is the assurance, personal, specific, and cheering; "Thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

First of all, there is the call to attend to present duty, altogether irrespective of future contingency. No revelation of the future that God has given or that man can make plain is for one moment to interfere with our obvious unmistakeable duties. In all persons who make real or pretended knowledge of the future a reason for neglecting the duties or violating the claims of the present, there is fanaticism, the fanaticism of monks and recluses; not what the Bible is, inspired common sense for Christian men. Let us remember that the prophecies do not repeal the precepts; and if any man were to make his belief of a prophecy of the future a reason for breaking or ignoring a precept obligatory in the present, that man would not rightly divide the word of truth. He would most grievously misinterpret and misapply it. Whatever be in the future, and whatever we expect in the future, this is our duty in the present; "Be steadfast, immovable; fight the good fight; hold fast thy crown, that no man take it from thee; occupy till I come; work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work." And therefore it appears to me that any man who makes the bright prospects of the future a reason for neglecting the very least duty of the present, altogether misinterprets and misdivides the word of God. Moral duties are not affected by anything upon earth. In the flame that wraps the globe, in the intense fire that calcines it to dust, this remains unscathed, undiluted, unaffected, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." A material universe may go to ruin; but moral obligations outlast the stars and all created things. We have instances constantly of God over-riding and reversing physical laws; but there is not an instance in the Bible of God over-riding, reversing, or dispensing with a moral law. We have found that some physical laws have been altered; fire failed to burn in the case of the three Hebrew youths; poison has ceased to destroy; the floods have failed to drown: these are instances of physical laws reversed. But God has never

reversed the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." I have not me adduce an illustration :—were a mother to be so fascinated and charmed with the study of the Apocalypse and it is right to be charmed and captivated with the bright prospect before us, that she neglects her infant, or her children, or her husband, she is acting a most unchristian part ; and she is making the prospects of the future glory, and her admiration of them, a reason, a most erroneous reason, for neglecting present and instant duties. Because you are not a Martha, absorbed in the duties of your household, and careful about many things, you need not be a Mary, careful about nothing, and absorbed in gratifying her intellectual and imaginative contemplations. In the words of a poet,

"Thine to work as well as pray,
Clearing thorny wrongs away ;
Plucking up the weeds of sin,
Letting heaven's sweet sunshine in."

Here is the combination of the duties of the present with the enjoyment of the prospects that lie before us. Because our hearts are in the bright glory of the future, our feet need not be idle ; because our affections rise above the world, we are not called upon to go out of the world. It is as much a duty to do the commands of your employer or your sovereign, for a soldier to obey his superior, a sailor his officer, and a servant his master, as it is to love God, to fear God, to study his word, and to look forward to the fulfilment of all the prophecies ; and if any man makes any anticipations, or any settlement of dates, or any opinion about the fulfilment of prophecy, a pretext for neglecting any one duty that devolves upon him, he perverts and dishonours the word of God, and acts himself most inconsistently. You must not suppose that you are not Christians because you are not preaching ; or that you are not acting under the influence of Christianity, because you are not studying the prophecies. On many an occasion more heavenly thoughts have risen with the sparks from

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in from the swinging censer at a cathedral altar. It is work, but the spirit in which all the obligations of the other. In fact, our idea of division is a very questionable one. I irable and enlightened Dr. e sacred, because all things e to be rescued and reclaimed ht to be done to honour and pre we say to every one who

is absorbed with these studies, or who gives his attention to them, "Go thy way;" mind your business; attend to your present duties; and if the world end, or if your life end, or if God step in and call you, if you be at your duty, in the House of Lords, in the House of Commons, in the counting-house, in the shop, in the streets, in the country, walking in the fields, or sailing on the sea; wherever you are for duty and in the way of duty, if God find you there, he finds you just where a good man wishes to be found—at your post and in your place. Therefore you are never to forget that all things are sacred to a Christian, and all situations holy. Go then thy way. The mount of transfiguration is the splendid vision of an hour; the valley, or the low level of common duties, is the obligation of a life-time. The glimpse of the glory as it sweeps past is given to cheer, not that you may dispense with duties, but that you may be strengthened to go into duties. God sees that we need refreshment and strength, we need health and comfort, and he is always ready to give and allow it; but he requires this, that we shall still feel duties and obligations are ours. And, after all, better wear out than rust out; better be worn out by our work than rust by indolence and apathy. If every man will only go his way, he will always find there is a way for him. God has a way or race-course for every man. You have only to look round to find it. Is your gift speech? Then go and speak a word to those that need to be instructed. Is your gift influence? Exert it accord-

ingly. Is your gift wealth? Expend it accordingly. God does not make you answerable for what he has not given you; but only for the sacred use of what he has given you. I have no manner of sympathy with the sentiments of those who think that when men become Christians they ought to bid farewell to the world; in other words, translated into plain speech, they ought to hand it over to the devil, and go and enjoy themselves out of it. That is not God's way. We are here as soldiers to fight in God's ranks, to protest against the devil's usurpation of the world; and every man at his own door-step to reclaim some little portion of that world, that it may enjoy the sunshine and the dews of heaven, and blossom like the rose, and be for a memorial to our God, and for the praise and the honour of his great name. Because God makes you a Christian, he does not say, Come mechanically out of the world; but he bids you, while in the world, in His strength, overcome the world. Therefore if I became a Christian soldier in the army, I would not sell my commission, I would be a Christian soldier; if I became a Christian in the parliament, I would not resign my seat, but I would act, and vote, and speak as a Christian senator in the parliament; and if I became a Christian, as a tradesman I would not shut my shop and sell my goods by auction, but I would act as a Christian tradesman, doing justly, cheating no man, speaking truth, and acting honourably and consistently with my professions and my principles. We are not to imitate the monk, who leaves the world, as he calls it, because he dreads its temptations; nor are we to imitate the suicide, who leaves the world because he dreads its troubles; but we are to be what the master has prayed that we may be—"I pray not that thou wouldest take them out of the world, but that thou wouldest keep them from the evil of the world." This is our position, these our marching orders, this our duty in the midst of the world. And therefore, Go thou thy way. Daniel the prophet must be Daniel the preacher; and Daniel the preacher must be also Daniel the practitioner. Go thy way, for

there is sin to be swept away ; there are broken hearts to be comforted ; there are sorrowing ones to be cheered ; there are ignorant ones to be enlightened ; there is plenty to do in this world of ours alone ; plenty to do. I do not ask you to do the thing that I prefer ; I do not ask you to engage in the specific mission that my sympathies may be with ; let every man select for himself something to do, and let him do it with all his might. I have a strong conviction that if we could only treat ourselves and the world in our Christian duties as people at Birmingham and Sheffield treat pins, we should do a vast deal more good. In making a pin, for instance, there are some seven men required ; that is to say, each man has his own part ; and that part, however minute, he does thoroughly. Were each person to take some specific thing, one a ragged school, another a day school, another a Sunday school, another the circulation of useful books and tracts, another the visiting of the poor ; and others, who have not time for that, give something to enable their proxies to do it, for proxies are permissible where there is no personal ability or opportunity ; were each to take up some one thing, and give his whole heart to that, I am quite sure that greater good would be done. The late Dr. Chalmers used to say that success is only to be obtained by being a man of one thing. If it is to preach and spread the glorious Gospel, give your whole heart, and soul, and strength to it, and you will do some good ; but if you combine with the preacher the schoolmaster, or if you have labours that interfere with it, or duties incompatible with it, your preaching will not be successful, and your labour will not have a blessing. Go thy way ; mind thy business, fulfil thy mission ; occupy till I come ; and then when the end arrives, you will hear the words, " Well done, thou good and faithful servant. I gave thee one talent, and thou hast made it five ; I gave to another a talent, and he has made it ten ; " each different degrees of success, but all, because Christians, doing something to make themselves more useful, the world wiser and happier

also. So much for the first prescription; "Go thy way."

There is in the second place the comforting and assuring promise, "Thou shalt rest." The first the prescription of duty; the second the cheering promise, to enable you to fulfil that duty. "Thou shalt rest." How full is the Bible of that word "rest!" "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And again, "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." Let me explain the meaning of the word "rest" in that passage in Hebrews iv.; it is the translation of the Greek word *σαββατισμός*, which means "a sabbath-keeping;" "there remaineth a sabbath-keeping for the people of God." The very phrase that denotes the millennial rest is "sabbath-keeping." Every sabbath, therefore, that we spend is in its measure, very imperfect it is true, a type and earnest of the everlasting sabbath; and every sabbath that we come to is a sabbath nearer the everlasting rest that remaineth for the people of God. What a beautiful day is the sabbath! I do not mean the Jewish sabbath; I do not mean the extreme Puritanic sabbath; I mean the Christian and the evangelical sabbath. It looks to me as if on that day the sun rose with a freshness indicating his design to begin a new and more glorious march; as if the sanctuary, wherever it be, and however humble, stood out from amidst the houses with sharper and more beautiful relief; as if there were a burst of heaven's sunshine once a week, to let us know what a bright and blessed state that will be; when all the mills stand still; the shops are shut; the noise, and bustle, and excitement of life seem laid; and it seems as if there were what in the Apocalypse is called a half-hour's silence; when man may listen and hear ringing unspent in their transit from home the blessed accents of his Father and his God. That sabbath, with its privileges, its lessons, its sanctuaries, is a type, an imperfect type, but still a type of the rest, the sabbath-keeping, that remaineth for the people of God. "Thou shalt rest." Now what will be the nature of that rest—

that future? For I confess I look oftener forward than I look upward. We are more prone to look upward than to look forward. It is remarkable that all promises of glad things, and bright things, and blessed things are in the future; and that the most common direction of the Bible is to look forward for our heaven, rather than to look upward towards it. If death take us, then it is God's will; but if we should be spared, and so introduced into that rest, that is more frequently what the New Testament points out. I do not think there is a text in the Bible warning man by the prospect of death, or bidding man look to death, or directing him to think of death. One will be very much struck in reading the Epistles by finding how constantly we are enjoined, "By the coming of the Lord;" by what is in the future; by the inheritance-laid up for us; by what we are taught to anticipate. We are constantly encouraged to duties by the reward not that is above us, but the reward that gleams in the distance far beyond and before us. It is promised, "Thou shalt rest." What will be the nature of this rest? First, it will not be a mere scene of sensuous enjoyment;—I use the word *sensuous* in contradistinction to the word *sensual*;—it will be the enjoyment of sense, but of sense sanctified. The future rest will not be spiritual only; we shall have bodies, but resurrection and glorified bodies, made after the image of our Lord's glorious body. There will be all that can charm the ear; can we suppose music is unfit for heaven? On the contrary. There will be all that will gratify the eye; a panorama of splendour, beauty, and magnificence, such as eye never saw, and such as poet never delineated. It is true all this will not be heaven, nor the chief joy in heaven; but on one ledge at least of our ceaseless ascent, ear, and eye, and taste, and imagination will be gratified by things such as eye has not yet seen, and ear has not yet heard. That blessed rest will not be exclusively intellectual. There will be the gratification of the intellect; questions that perplex philosophers now will be axioms then; the difficulties of the most cultivated intellects here will be the perfect knowledge

and possession of the humblest in the kingdom of heaven. What we know not now we shall know hereafter. The desire of knowledge becomes knowledge, just as the desire of grace becomes grace. How many things do we want to know; what heights, and depths, and mysteries, and perplexities, and obscurities, constantly beset our path; and how do we long for some Œdipus to solve the riddle, some Solomon to teach us more than we dream of! how earnestly, therefore should we anticipate that day when "what thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter," shall no longer be a promise in the future, but a reality in the present; and when we shall know even as we are known. But this is not all; the future rest will not be a Pagan Elysium, nor a Mahometan Paradise, nor a great intellectual school, a higher university; it will be none of these—it will be something greater still. The world's wisest ones cannot calculate its area, the poet's brightest picture cannot paint its repose. It will be that perfection to which all past ages have contributed, and in whose glory all past ages shall be crowned. It will be to the world what the flower is to the stem and to the root; its culminating beauty and perfection. It is a thought I would not give up for the world that this earth of ours is not doomed to annihilation, nor to be made a present of to him who has corrupted it; every inch of it is to be purified, every atom of it is to be rebaptized; it is to be the loveliest orb in the sisterhood of stars; on which all orbs will look, and from which lessons will leap up soaring into distant worlds, and making the universe wiser, and happier, and more thankful, because one sister orb fell, and has been reclaimed, restored, and introduced again into the communion of the happy, the holy, and the unfallen. Imagination will find its rest; intellect its rest; prophet, and patriarch, and evangelist, will find their rest; we shall have all the heart's yearnings gratified, all the mind's desires met; and as we enter into that blessed rest, and taste of its joy, and find all broken circles restored, and all those that we called lost waiting for us, we shall be astonished that we

groped, and loved to grope in this dark, damp crypt that we call the present world, and that we did not long to go up into that glorious sunlit cathedral, the high altar of which is the Son of God, in which the song never ceases, in which there shines the light of an everlasting sabbath ; in which there is no need of the sun, nor of the moon, for the glory of God and of the Lamb are the light thereof. Such then is the rest that remaineth for the people of God. It will be rest from all toil, official and political. Daniel was a prime minister in Babylon ; he met with persecution ; he was maligned and misrepresented. When God told Daniel this, it was as if he said, "Daniel, you will cease to be a minister of the earthly sovereign, you must now come up higher, and become a minister of the heavenly ; your work in Babylon is done, your enjoyment in heaven begins, and in the rest that remaineth for the people of God will be augmented day by day." This expression, "Thou shalt rest," means also, Thou shalt be free from all trouble, and grief, and aches, and ills, that flesh is heir to. These are the progeny of sin ; but in that blessed sabbath, that glorious rest, we shall be free from all these. There will be a sky whose sunshine will not scorch, nor be interrupted by a transient cloud, nor know a western declension ; there will be that river that maketh glad the city of our God ; there will be rest, enjoyment, peace, immunity from all that disturbs ; for the gates of glory that let the Christian in shut out all the cares, ills, and aches that the Christian has long been heir to. No wave of trouble will fall into that beautiful and peaceful bay ; the unspent and remote sound of it from far off only will be heard ; and the sense of past trouble will only add to the intensity of present enjoyment. The promise to Daniel, "Thou shalt rest," implies, Thou shalt rest from all sickness, from disease, from death, from sin ; thou shalt rest for ever. In the language of the prophet, "The inhabitant shall not say any more, I am sick." Headaches and heartaches will be unknown. Those of us who have health, oh how thankful we should be ! I do not believe that any one knows the blessings of health except those that, like Job, say in the morn-

ing, "Would God it were the evening," and in the evening, "Would God it were the morning." There will be health, uninterrupted health, perfect freedom from all sickness, from tears, from death. You will rest, finally, from all the assaults of Satan, all the temptations of the Wicked One; from all that can lead you to diverge or to go astray, or to do what is sinful and unholily in the sight of God. What a grand thought, that every sabbath brings us nearer to this rest! Each sabbath is like the wave of the advancing tides of the sea, kissing the shore, preliminary to the approach of the fulness and grandeur of the ocean. Every year that we spend, every sabbath that we enjoy, is so much of this world gone, and we are so much nearer that rest that remaineth for the people of God. Such is the rest before us. Broken-hearted ones, there is healing for you. Rachel, weeping for your children, because they are not, there is the restoration of them for you. Ye who are weary and heavy laden with this world's burdens, there is rest for you. Ye who are sick and suffering, and know not what health is, be patient; there is an issue out of it, a glorious deliverance, a blessed rest. Let us draw on the future for a little sunshine in the present. You may draw from that inexhaustible capital, and you will find that the present will be lightened in its load as the future comes in to cheer and to comfort you.

"Thou shalt stand in thy lot." What does this mean? I answer, first of all, that the individual Christian is here recognised as individually observed of God. This is a thought I wish each of us could realise, that God's eye, his loving eye, his careful eye, is as much upon me as if there was nobody else in the whole of Europe he cared for. There is not a sorrow in your inmost heart that has not its resounding echo in the heart of your Father; there is not an anxiety you feel, however trivial it may seem to others, that God regards as unworthy of notice. Magnificent thought, we move in the midst of a ceaseless guardianship; all heaven encompasses us; our Father's eye is ever on us.

"Go *thou* thy way; for *thou* shalt rest, and stand in *thy* lot." What is this lot? It is described in that passage which the poet Burns said he never could read without weeping. "Who are these, and whence came they? These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." That is the lot; in that lot, in that shining lot, Daniel and those that follow the faith of Daniel shall stand. But perhaps there is something more specific still in the promise, "Thou shalt stand in thy lot." There are degrees of glory; the right of entrance into heaven is for all Christians; but there are heights in heaven, there are thrones, and degrees of glory. If I were to put a vessel that holds a pint, and a vessel that holds a quart, and a vessel that holds a gallon, into the ocean, they would all be full; but the one that holds a gallon would contain more than the one that holds only a pint. So when all Christians go to heaven, they will all be full of happiness, but one has a larger capacity than another, and is capable of a greater amount of felicity. Daniel himself says, "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel was to be numbered in that lot. He had been a successful preacher, a faithful confessor, and he will therefore be in the goodly fellowship of the prophets; others in the noble army of martyrs; others in the glorious company of the apostles; and others in thy holy church throughout all the world—among the spirits of just men made perfect, numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting.

LECTURE XXVIII.

THE ENDURING WORD.

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”—MATTHEW xxiv. 35.

I HAVE explained these words, “This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled.” I showed, first, by references to the usage of the words; secondly, by facts that are legible along the whole path of history for eighteen hundred years, that one great nationality, which is the meaning of the word, has not passed away; that it gives token still of its existence, by its influence, its insulation from the mass, and yet its command of all the wealth almost of the world; that the Jewish race, so ill treated, insulted, and reproached, but so mistakenly so, shall exist until the close of this dispensation; and that then, like a streamlet that has pursued its course for eighteen hundred years, it shall mingle and mix with the endless main of a redeemed and regenerated people. The word rendered “pass away,” here used to describe the duration of the Jewish race, is also applied to the word of God, Christ’s word; heaven and earth shall pass away, but it shall not pass away.—We have seen that various physical phenomena, moral calamities, great changes and convulsions in the physical constitution of things, must precede the winding up of that magnificent drama of which angels are the spectators, and men the solemn and responsible actors. All these earthquakes, famines, darkening of the sun, shaking of the heavens, distress of nations, perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, are the tokens of nature’s sickness, the evidences of her increasing disease, and advancing decay, foretokens, according to their depth and multiplication, that her death is near; when the old earth, weary with the sobs of her children, sick of being

a grave for her offspring, torn and ploughed by war, convulsed by earthquake, shall at last die, but only to rise again a new and more beautiful earth. But, says our Lord, this heaven and this earth may pass away, yet something shall outlive them all; and draw its nutriment, and the elements and growth of its victory from all; that word which lasts for ever: the most magnificent of created things is transient; the least word that Christ has spoken eternal and enduring for ever. What word is this? The answer is, "My word." Who spoke this word? Jesus Christ the Saviour. Must not He be God who could fling upon the winds such a prophecy as this, and be sure of its everlasting success? The man of sorrows, He who was acquainted with grief, He who accomplished that mysterious tragedy which ended in a cross on earth, but culminates in a crown in heaven; He who had nowhere to lay his head, He who was marching to a grave, says, seated on the Mount of Olives in the midst of a few fishermen, "My word shall never pass away." He that said so was either a fanatic, or He was the living God; that He was the latter we know; that the prophecy, therefore, is truth we are sure: "heaven and earth may both pass away, but my word shall not pass away." I have said it is Christ's word: do we not, however, when we open this book, think it is the word of Jeremiah, of Moses, of Isaiah, of John, and of James? They were only the instruments through which Christ's word was ever audible. In all the songs of Moses is heard the song of the Lamb; in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, in the rushing strains of Isaiah, in the plaintive hymns and melodies of David, in the awful magnificence of Habakkuk, when he speaks of the perpetual hills bowing themselves, and the everlasting mountains being scattered;" in the dying prophecies of Malachi, in the startling accents of the Baptist; in the gentle speech of John, in the rushing logic of Paul, in the gorgeous eloquence of the seer of Patmos; in all their varied strains we can hear ringing clear, sweet, pervading all, audible in all, the word and voice of the Son of God;

their words are the mere echoes and reflections of Christ's mind.

What are some of the marks and characteristics of Christ's word? I will quote one or two as given in the Bible. First, it was said of him, "He speaks as one that hath authority." Open a page of an ancient philosopher; it is full of guesses, of hopes, of dim imaginations. Open a page of the gospel: "I say unto you;" "It is written;" "This is the truth;" "I am the way, the truth, and the life;" these are the unfaltering utterances of truths that never came within the horizon before, the decisive expression of magnificent words, never guessed at in Grecian school, never dreamed of in Jewish synagogue. There is a glory on the inspired page that you cannot mistake; it has a kingly stamp and majesty about it; it bears the very impress of the authority and the superscription of a king. There is a simplicity and a grandeur in that book, an acquaintance with the past and the future, an inspection and a revelation of heaven and hell; and what is greater than all, an analysis of my heart and my conscience; so that when I read this book it looks as if there was a mirror before my heart, reflecting all its most fugitive lights and shadows, as if there were a hand touching my conscience and laying bare all its innermost doubts, fears, hopes, perplexities: truly then He who wrote this book, and by it searches my heart, was none else than He that made my heart, and gave me all my mental and moral organism. Christ speaks in this word with authority; we hear men in the present day saying, "We want an authority," here it is; they want a speaking authority, here it is; "Hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The peculiarity of the Bible is, it is not so much written as lived and spoken, living and speaking. Even Milton's majestic poem palls upon the taste; even the most magnificent passages in the great dramas of the master of human speech and knowledge we get tired of reading; but there is about this book a freshness, so real that it makes us feel as if we heard those beautiful accents, such as never fell from man's lips, upon the banks of the Jordan—that awful and piercing wail

from the cross, which rent the grave and entered heaven—those congratulatory strains when He rose from the dead, those sweet encouragements, those gentle rebukes, those musical promises. There is about the Bible a freshness that makes us feel, whilst it speaks with authority, it speaks in such a way as makes it, like the song in the Apocalypse, ever old and yet ever new. If Christ speaks in this word with authority, let me ask, what have critics to do? Not to amend the Bible, but to ascertain what are the very words of the Bible. What have preachers to do? Not to adorn the Bible; for to adorn its glorious truths is to try to paint the lily, to gild refined gold, or to add fresh perfume to the violet; but simply to unfold them. What has reason to do? To bow before an authority which is the author, and the inspirer, and the maker of reason. What have all of us to do? To receive God's truth; to lay it up in our hearts, to exemplify it in our lives, to spread it abroad, at home, and amid the heathen in distant lands; and not to cease to do so till the accents uttered by the Man of Sorrows ring in glorious reverberations from east, and west, and north, and south, and from heaven and earth, and the whole earth is filled with his glory.

I turn to another characteristic of his word; and it is one which He gave himself; his testimony is true. "I am the truth:" "Thy word is truth." Christ's word is truth. So, you say, is Euclid; so is mathematics; so is sunrise and the sunset. But there is a distinction among truths; some truths are useless, other truths are instructive, other truths are interesting: but the truths in this book are saving, essential, vital. As in the human economy, you may lose an arm, and yet be healthy and live long; you may lose a foot, and yet be healthy and live long; but if you lose the heart, or the brain, or the lungs, there is an end of you for this world. In our body there are some organs that are essential, there are other organs that are very useful, and there are a few that are merely ornamental. It is the same with this blessed book; there are certain truths in it essential; there are

other truths that are most valuable, and there are some that are ornamental ; but none that are not true, and of importance to the conversion, the comfort, happiness, or progress of the human soul. Our blessed Lord says his word is truth ; truth without the least alloy ; light reflected from words in which there is no deflection whatever. We need not only to see an object, but we need to have a pure medium through which to see it ; and to find the way to heaven as inspired by the Spirit of God, it needs the pure medium of pure words, that we may see the way, the truth, and the life, in all its pristine purity and glory.

His word is spirit and life. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and life." Milton's "Paradise Lost" is poetry ; Cicero's writings are eloquence, but Christ's word is life. One other characteristic I must give. It is the admission of his enemies ; "Never man spake like this man." What proud spirits has not a single sentence from the Scripture humbled ; what broken hearts has it not bound up ; what sorrows has it not diluted or washed away ; what tears has it not dried up ! Other voices leave echoes behind them ; this voice leaves a deep and permanent impression wherever it falls ; it is the savour of life, the incorruptible seed, through which we are born again. Now such is the character of Christ's word, drawn from itself.

What does Christ say of this word ? "Heaven and earth shall pass away ; but my word shall not pass away." The empire of Cæsar is gone ; the legions of Rome are mouldering in the dust ; the avalanches that Napoleon hurled upon Europe have melted away ; the pride of the Pharaohs is fallen ; the pyramids they raised to be their tombs are sinking every day in the desert sands ; Tyre is a rock for bleaching fishermen's nets ; Sidon has scarcely left a wreck behind ; but the word of Christ still survives ; it speaks with undiluted emphasis, it spreads with uninterrupted speed. All things that threatened to extinguish it have only aided it ; and it proves every day how transient is the noblest

monument that man can build, how enduring is the least word that the Son of God has spoken. Tradition has dug for it many a grave, intolerance has lighted for it many a faggot; many a Judas has betrayed it with a kiss; many a Peter has denied it with an oath; many a Demas has forsaken it; "yea, heaven and earth may pass away, but my word shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." Those things that once seemed to rise like mountain obstructions to its march are day by day dissolving like wreaths of snow in the sunshine, in contrast to the advancing and triumphant word of the Lord. The scepticism of Hume, and Rousseau, and Paine, is now laughed at even by disbelievers in Christianity; the objections of Strauss, urged a few years ago with great power and in the most plausible language, are now regarded as untenable even by those who are opposed to the Gospel. And the last and the only form of scepticism that we have now, if we exclude mere practical scepticism, is that of Emerson, and some who have arisen in the continent of America, who seem to triumph in pulling down everything, but who have lost all idea of building up anything; and their objections are so metaphysical, so fanciful, so transcendental, that they have only had effect with a few speculative minds; they have made no impression upon the masses of mankind. If we turn to other forms of error, Mahometanism is dying out; Romanism is losing its influence; and the hour is almost at hand when a voice shall ring from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and shall rise no more at all." We see on every side evidence of the progress of the Bible; and of the fulfilment of this prophecy; and of the decadence or disappearance of all that stands in its way. And after heaven and earth have passed away, and a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, are come, will Christ's word cease then? No; the only change will be—all its promises will be enjoyments, all its prophecies history, all its invitations experience; and what is now inscribed upon the parchment, or

upon the frail paper, shall be inscribed up, as its glorious page,—the stars will be its letters, constellations will be its magnificences; the winds will whisper its sweet sound, waves in their chimes will give utterance to its glories; and that word so long persecuted, then enthroned and enshrined, will be the reference book of the redeemed in glory; and ever as a Christian wants to trace and retread all the way through which God led him upon earth, he will take the chart in his hand with the experience in his heart; and ever as he discovers a new place where he raised an Ebenezer here below, he will lift up a fresh song unto Him that loved him, and washed him from his sins in his own blood, and hath made him a king and a priest unto his God. But this word of Christ shall be felt in hell, as well as enjoyed and realised in heaven. The lost in misery will be constrained to say, "Heaven and earth have passed away, O God; but thy word has not passed away." Thou didst say, He that believeth not shall be damned; O God, it is true, hopelessly, terribly, without mitigation, without measure, without end, it is true. And the saved in heaven shall be able to say, He that believeth shall be saved; O Lord, it is true, gloriously true. It will be discovered then that what we thought adjuncts were essentials, and what we thought exaggerated metaphors were literal truths; and that the least promise, or blessing, or mercy, that Christ spoke or that the Spirit taught was never couched in exaggerated language, but rather in words not vast and magnificent enough to embody the glorious living truth.

Christian believer, here is comfort, in the great tribulation to you. Of the least promise that you choose to select you may say, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but this promise shall not pass away. "I will never leave thee; I will never forsake thee;" this is not a random expression; nor language that needs to be diluted; it is literally and strictly true, applicable to you, may be enjoyed by you, wherever you are, and under whatever circumstances you are placed. Hesi-

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heathen at home, dark-
places, sin everywhere?
heer you; and what is
be filled with my glory,

... the Lord of hosts." Then remember you are on
the winning side; a Christian is in a phalanx that never
can be permanently if it be temporarily beaten; for the
whole earth shall be covered with the glory of the
Lord, as the waters of the ocean cover the channels of
the great deep. If these words reach a preacher of the
Gospel, there is comfort here for him also. One some-
times feels depressed to be doomed to ceaseless sowing,
and never, or at all events rarely, reaping; but we are
wrong. Ours is to fulfil the Master's commission; it is
his to evolve the appropriate issue; and he himself has
made the distinction; "One soweth, and another reap-
eth." Some ministers excel in ploughing, harrowing,
tearing up, and preparing the heart's rugged soil, taking
out its gnarled roots of wickedness, in order that a
second may come and sow the seed. He that sows
the seed amid the tears of weeping eyes, as martyrs
have sown it amid the blood of warm hearts, may
never see the harvest; but another will come in, and
he will bring home the sheaves with joy rejoicing. We
can therefore fall back upon this promise, and I must
say it is satisfying, "My word shall not return unto
me void." If, therefore, we speak Christ's truth, it is
hardening some, it is softening others; and where we
can see no immediate issue at all, it is going forth upon
the wings of the wind to accomplish promised, pledged,
and magnificent results. We take therefore the words
of advice of the poet,—

"Drop it where thorns and thistles grow,
Scatter it on the rock;
Then when the glorious day,
The day of God is come,
The reapers shall descend,
And heaven cry, Harvest home."

These are words of promise, and therefore of encouragement. A greater than the poet has said, "My word shall not return to me void." This is the foundation of our hopes of success.

LECTURE XXIX.

A THOUSAND YEARS AS ONE DAY.

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."—2 PETER iii. 8.

IT is the obvious drift of the apostle, in these words, to vindicate God from the charge of what seems delay in fulfilling his promises to them that fear Him, and in executing judgments upon them that dishonour and disobey Him. You must not, says Peter, measure the greatness of God by a rule of human construction; you must recollect that eternity is the measure of his existence; threescore and ten mete out ours; and that on the great scale of an everlasting Being, a thousand years is less, relatively, than a single day is when measured and estimated in relation to the few and weary years that bound the pilgrimage of man. The idea that the sacred penman teaches us is, that our days are fleet and few; that God's days are endless and enduring; and the practical inference we are to draw from the contrast is, that we should use the days, few or many, that God has given us, for those great and magnificent ends which will involve at once our highest happiness and God's greatest glory. Man's life since he sinned and fell, and still more since the Flood, has been likened to the most evanescent of created things. We read, "Man spends his days as a tale that is told." When you hear an interesting story, the echoes of which continue to ring in the cells of memory, it seems as if the time spent in telling it had been moments and not hours. So when you look back upon the past period of life, how rapidly it has rushed away! Let the man who has crossed the keystone of life's arch, and instead of ascending begins at length to descend, take a retrospect of the past period of his

life ; does it not seem almost like a dream ? We can scarcely realize the thought that ten, fifteen, twenty, or thirty years have passed away ; but we find the thought meetly and happily expressed by the inspired penman, "we spend our days like a tale that is told." Again, man is likened to a flower of the field in frailty ; to a mountain torrent in evanescence, rushing for a few hours full, or overflowing its banks, then disappearing and leaving only dry rocks in its channel. All nature seems exhausted of her choicest imagery to persuade us—how strange that we should need to be persuaded !—that our days are always few, and mostly full of sorrow. But so it is ; we admit the fact ; but of all acts it is one we least feel. A poet said in scorn—

"All men think all men mortal but themselves."

We believe abstractedly what we read ; but the difficulty is to treat a grand truth as men sometimes treat a sinful feeling, to give it hospitality, and to cherish it, until that which was an applicant outside at the door, is received to the warm fireside of the heart, and is there wrought into the very woof and warp and tissue of our every-day life and feeling. Take home this varied imagery, so expressive of the brevity of man's life ; and when you feel it, do not say with the sensualist, We must soon die ; let us eat, and drink, and be merry : do not say with the monk, We must soon die ; let us leave the world and go into a convent : but let us say with the Christian, "The time is short ; it remains, therefore, that they that weep be as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use the world, as not abusing it ; for the fashion of it speedily passeth away." While speaking of years, and of our experience of what the years are, let me notice a very interesting truth that we are disposed sometimes to forget ; that not a minute, nor an hour, nor a day, nor a year sweeps over us without leaving influences, and impressions, and giving impulses that may never end. There is not a cloud that sweeps

through the sky, and casts its shadow on the green field, that does not leave an influence and an impression upon the grass over which it has swept. Whether this be true or not, it is certainly true that there is not a year passes over us that does not alter the aspect of home, leave grey hairs to some, broken hearts to others, and testify its transit by gaps, and losses, and crosses, and bitter disappointments, and heavy trials, and heart- quakes worse than earthquakes : time as it sweeps over us leaves traces and footprints eternity will scarcely be able to efface. Let us notice some of these. Every section of time, however small it may be, alters the body itself. Not a year passes over our heads which does not whiten some hair that was black before, or leave on the outward physical system traces of its rough flood rushing through its many channels to the eternal deep. I do not believe that we are physically at any one moment the same in all respects, however microscopic the changes may be, that we were a few hours or months before. It seems as if, in youth, time amused himself by decking every part of the body with beauty and with blossom, and it seems as if, after forty, time spent all his attention in picking off each flower and blossom, till all becomes sere, and withered, and old. During the first half of our life time is constantly giving ; during the last half time seems continually abstracting ; during the first building up and making more beautiful and strong ; during the last breaking down and making more feeble and frail : of a certainty not one of us is physically to-day what we were twelve months ago. I mean, of course, in outward condition ; some are older, others frailer ; the prints of the crow's feet are multiplying above one's eye ; the wrinkles of the retreating tide of life begin to appear upon the brow of another ; the heart has a more muffled beat, and the limbs feel less strong, the muscles are less elastic, and what is worse than all, the buoyancy of the heart is not what it was before. We are changed ; the times change, and in the current we are changed also. But each minute, day, and year, as they pass, leave an impression on the mind or the intellect just as truly as

on the body. From infancy to maturer years intellect is developed, powerfully and unmistakeably developed; but it does not follow that during the decline of life, when the body decays, the intellect decays proportionably also. On the contrary, you will find in the old man, not indeed the same buoyant and soaring imagination that was his in youth, but what is better, a ripeness of judgment, a maturity of experience, and a capacity of discriminating and distinguishing, altogether strange to the season of youth.

I have long thought there is a great deal of nonsense talked and written in the newspapers, alleging the incapacity of old age. If I wished to have the mind that one could most rely on, and most defer to in the greatest crisis, it would just be an old man with good health and an experienced and ripened judgment. True, he could not lead the forlorn hope as he used to do; he could not mix in the fray with all the energy with which a young soldier wars; but then he compensates for the absence of these by other attributes. I do not believe that the mind decays with the body. But you say, Do we not see old men sometimes get very stupid? I admit it. But what goes wrong? It is not the mind; it is only the machinery through which it acts that will not act as it once did. There is in mind more or less ceaseless development. Who can doubt that the mind of an adult at thirty years of age, and the mind of a child of seven or eight years of age, are totally dissimilar? The chasm between the intellect of Sir Isaac Newton, a baby on his mother's knee, and the intellect of Sir Isaac Newton when it weighed in scales the orbs of the sky, and defined with majestic precision the density, the distance, and the velocity of every star, is very great. And should the future be, what we have reason to expect it will be, the ceaseless expansion and development of man's intellect, I can in some degree anticipate what a grand home, what a blessed estate, what a glorious reward, will be the eternal heaven that is before every true and believing Christian. Our intellects change for the better

as we grow older. I am quite sure, to take a more humble illustration, when we think of what we said and did when we were young, we are ashamed. However little improved may be what I preach now, yet when I look back twenty years upon the notes of what I preached then, I am amazed that any one listened with patience to the very small talk I then uttered. One feels growth in one's mind ; and it is a most delightful thought that one is growing wiser and more experienced, and more able to be useful and to instruct ; instead of feeling, what would be a great calamity, that one's intellect decays, and one's mental powers lose their elasticity, and one's stores of instruction and reading become useless.

Our feelings also are affected by the lapse and current of years. Experience modifies the exercise of feelings of one class, and resists the action of others that belong to another class. Time has dried up the springs of some feelings, but he has opened new springs and swelled the currents of other and of better feelings. Feelings to which we are now strangers were most familiar to us once ; and feelings that we cherish at this moment will be very much strangers to us by and by. But, above all, the years as they sweep past are affecting our spiritual and moral condition. Our moral and spiritual nature is in a state of constant development and growth. This growth may not be always good ; it may possibly be evil ; but growth there is ; stagnation in moral and spiritual development I believe there never is, and there never can be. Every act of liberality, every deed of goodness, every feeling and affection that we cherish, is becoming a habit, and that habit is becoming a nature ; and every one is consolidating by the lapse of years a moral and a spiritual character that will only be developed more and more through endless ages, either in eternal misery or in eternal blessedness. And though it may be very true that the influence is noiseless as the flight of an angel's wing, yet it is not the less mighty on that account. The ceaseless falling of one drop of water will hollow a stone ; the ceaseless

application of slight blows in continuous succession will shake the strongest foundation. In the same manner thoughts become words, words become acts, acts become habits, habits become life ; and that life lasts and endures for ever and ever. What a solemn thought then, we are builders for eternity ; and the yester-days, the to-days, and the to-morrows, are the materials with which we are building up a superstructure that shall either glow amid the splendours of unsetting suns, or reflect the lurid glare of that fire that is not quenched, and of that mingled day and night which is for ever and ever. Well and justly, therefore, has the poet said—

“ Build to-day then strong and stout,
On a firm and ample base ;
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.”

Time also alters our relations and relationships in life. Let any one look back a few years ; what changes have taken place ! I was one day trying to count the students with whom I sat at college on the same bench. I found so many dead, so many gone to distant lands, so many sunk weary with the march on the road to success, and such changes, that when I review and ponder them all, I cannot help feeling somewhat melancholy and distressed. But if you will not look back on a public field, but take your nearer one—the friends of your youth, where are they ? Echo can only answer, Where are they ? Some of them turned into rivals, others into bitter foes ; some of their familiar faces passed into the shadow of the grave ; and voices that once were musical in your ears, hushed in the silence of the tomb ! And if you will go home this day, and look at your family, you should remember that the family that meets to-day under the same roof and at the same board, in a very few years, even in the case of the youngest mother, will be all scattered ; some dead and buried, some in distant lands, some struggling with or succumbing under the waves they cannot swim or wade through ; and so great

changes in a few years will take place that when you visit the old homestead it will look to you such an altered, changed place, that you cannot believe that it once was home, or that there you spent many a merry Christmas, and wished many a happy new year. Such changes will speedily occur; and may they, if nothing else does it, constrain you to detach your affections from seeking a home below, and lead you to lift them up, and seek a mansion where there is the true home—a place synonymous with the heaven of our Father.

The flight of years will affect not only your relationships, but very materially your fortunes; as they have affected the fortunes, and the whole condition of thousands. Men rich at the close of one year, are penniless at the close of another. The master of yesterday is the servant of to-day; the statesman who one year leads the nation in its march, another year is at the bottom of the ladder, depressed, and almost forgotten. The writer celebrated to-day, is cast aside for another to-morrow. The soldier whose name is synonymous with victory, and whose praises are on the nation's lips, is forgotten too soon. Everything seems to have a date and a time, an entrance and an exit; and all of them—oh! with what impressive and thrilling eloquence—teach, “Arise, and let us depart; this is not your rest;” “there *remaineth* a rest for the people of God.”

Such is the influence of the years as they pass by; such the impressions they should leave: and thus more and more they are lessening the links and ties that knit us to this world. The great question is, are we multiplying the bonds, and bands, and ties that bind us to a better world? Time clearly is detaching the world from us, and us from the world. Is eternity enlisting our sympathies, our hopes, our thoughts, and our prospects with it?

Having thus looked at the years in their individual influence, let me now look at them in their social—I might almost say, national—influence. Review the sweep of past years. What a year of commercial hurricane is

one!—houses of business, supposed to be built upon the rock, have yielded like straw huts to the overwhelming mountain-torrent. Merchants that started in 1857, like strong men ready to run a race, have scarcely enough to maintain them decently with bread, as far as they can see, during the remainder of a life-time: and, what is worse, widows and orphans, that trusted their all where they ought not to have trusted any, are deprived of the little amount bequeathed by a husband, or the little savings which they had accumulated by their own industry; and are left dependent upon the charity, it may be of the uncharitable, during the remainder of their weary life. Battle-fields have awful spectacles of shattered limbs: but there must be, after a commercial hurricane, broken hearts—not so visible, but more terrible and awful still. May it not be, that every such great convulsion has a meaning? I think it is all very well to say, it was speculation, over-trading, want of caution. It is wonderful how wise we are after—not before; and how prone we are always to find out causes, and excuses, and palliations. These secondary causes may be plausible; but I believe there are higher causes at work that alone explain all. “Trust not in uncertain riches.” We see with what force that single adjective comes up—“*uncertain* riches.” Many a man believes that epithet to-day, who laughed at it as an exaggerated hyperbole lately. Do not these things also teach us another lesson? If riches increase, which is not sinful; on the contrary, I like to see a man industrious, and getting rich by his industry—but, if riches increase, set not your heart upon them. Now, I will tell you why: if you be a Christian, if God see you setting your heart upon any one thing beneath Himself, that is the one thing that God will sweep away. And, therefore, I warn every man, upon the authority of God’s word, that whatever be the thing that he is setting his mind upon so much that it dislodges God, and displaces the homage that he owes to Him,—as sure as any are living Christians, God will smite the idol in its niche, and create in the chasm it leaves behind a thirst for God,

the living God. May there not be another lesson taught us by these commercial convulsions—namely, what Christ said 1800 years ago—“Riches make to themselves wings, and flee away?” Let us mark well the words: it does not say that you make wings for them; this you could easily understand; but, by some mysterious law under the control of God, riches that you have accumulated and have worshipped, make to themselves wings, and flee away. And may we not also learn from all this, that the loss of earthly riches has been to some the gain of riches that never fade?—that they who were rich in money yesterday, are poor in it to-day, but rich in faith? And, at all events, there is one lesson passing times do most deeply impress; and that is, the old lesson,—“Set not your affections upon things that are beneath, but upon things that are above.” Should great losses dislodge from our country’s heart, that growing, miserable, contemptible worship of Mammon, which was beginning to be substituted for the worship of the living God, its painful discipline will be matter of thankfulness for ever. I think of all pride, purse pride is the most detestable. I can understand a man being proud of his lineage; sinful as that is, there is something noble in it: I can understand a man being proud of his learning; I can understand a woman being proud of her beauty; sinful as it is, wrong as it is, yet there is something magnanimous or real in these. But for a man to be proud that he has made thousands by chicanery, or by cheating, or, if you like, by honest industry; to be proud that he has been able to scrape together so much trash that we call gold, is a detestable sin; and if God has opened our eyes to see its meanness and its detestable nature, apart from its sinfulness, we will thank God in after years for the commercial earthquake of recent days. But if we cast our eyes abroad, there have been, as I have often alluded to, yet more terrible scenes. You remember how we all felt during the Russian war, when the brave, the strong, the wise, that could defy the Russian foe, fell before pestilence, and plague, and hunger, and naked-

ness, and cold ; you remember what an awful impression it made upon the country ; and what vows of reformation, what great changes for the better were to take place ; and men certainly felt solemnized as they had never been solemnized before. The Russian war has ceased ; at least, a lull has taken place ; we just begin to get as purse-proud, as forgetful, as grasping, as worldly, and self-indulgent, as we were before. And the strange fact is, that we never look at these things, such is our nature, as God's judgments, or, rather, as God's chastisement for special sins ; we are always sure to select a scapegoat. It is wonderful to see how man likes the idea of atonement when it suits his selfishness ; how little he likes it in its own grand and spiritual beauty. If anything goes wrong, it is some statesman ; if a battle is lost, it is some commander-in-chief : in all of which we are incompetent judges ; but we persuade ourselves that we are very competent in our opinions of ourselves, and we fancy that through all these mistakes whoever is to blame that we are not. God wakens us to a sense of responsibilities we never felt before, and teaches us at the cannon's mouth lessons that we would not learn from the lips of his consecrated preachers. After the Russian war had ceased, and all its scenes had passed away, a war ten times more severe, more disastrous, more terrible, without the moral grandeur of the Russian war, because it was a mutiny of revolted soldiers and subjects, absorbed the thoughts and anxieties of the nation. I am sure I do not exaggerate when I say there is scarcely a family in England that has not been in some way affected by the scenes that transpired in India ; scarcely a parsonage in England—I am sure there is scarcely a manse in Scotland—that has not its dead on Indian plains to weep over, and forebodings about the living exposed to perils greater than those encountered by the dead, over which to pray, and ponder, and meditate. Our brilliant and our rapid victories have not been without bitter and terrible losses ; and I have not the least doubt that the gloomiest Christmas spent in Eng-

land for half a century, if not for a whole one, was Friday, the 25th of December, 1857. Many who were strong, young, and hopeful, are now numbered with the dead; many left behind, who with heroism, and hope, and courage, long struggled amidst tremendous difficulties, encountering terrible resistance; some wounded, others starved, others injured in health, so that when they come home they will be but the shattered wrecks of what they once were. Nothing I think can lead one to tolerate war except a deep sense that it is an awful and inevitable duty. But when we review the whole of that Indian war, the cruelties inflicted, the sufferings endured, the hairbreadth escapes, one is constrained to feel there cannot be chance in it; it cannot be accident; it is God teaching our country a lesson. Do not blame the Government, do not blame the East India Company; blame ourselves, blame our sins, blame our selfishness, our avarice, our love of wealth, all that we have done that we ought not to have done, and all that we have left undone that we ought to have done. Yet even this sore calamity was not without intermingling lights that are of most precious value to us. For instance, we may see in the Indian war that some lessons have come out that we would not learn before, which it has most emphatically taught us. We have learnt, for instance, first of all, that our Indian empire is to be retained not by the *prestige* of a grand name, nor at the point of the bayonet, nor by the fear and terror that we can strike to the hearts of a very susceptible and sensitive race; the only hope of India's being continued as an *appanage* of our grand empire is the thorough Christianization of it from its one end to the other. We remember how often we tried to teach this at our missionary meetings, but it fell powerless and cold. It has now been taught in the most impressive and unmistakeable way. In Bengal Christianity had no hold; the Brahmin was absolute in his power; the Christian missionary dare not hint to a Sepoy that there was a Saviour, Christ the Lord. What is the history of Bengal? There the revolt had its focus; from

thence it radiated over India ; and it is the Bengalese Sepoys who have murdered women, tossed infants on their bayonets, and left hundreds of women in India at this moment, I am told, who prefer (what an awful fact !) to be registered at home as dead, than to present themselves mutilated, as these fiends in human shape have left them. But, mark the contrast. Go to Madras, where Christianity has struck its roots the deepest, where its light has spread the widest, where there are hundreds, I mean in the surrounding districts, of Christian temples, and where missions have been most successful ; the territory of Madras has been comparatively peaceful. Is it possible to escape the conviction that the revolt has been great, cruel, and barbarous, just where Christianity was least known ? and that peace and loyalty have abounded most, just where the seeds of Christianity had been most widely scattered, and had grown up into the largest and most luxuriant harvests ? This lesson thus taught us, I hope, will never be forgotten. Another lesson has been taught us—that education without Christianity may be a curse, it never can be a blessing. Nana Sahib, the instigator of those cruel and barbarous murders, was educated at a secular school ; he never was infected by the presence of a Bible, he never had his mind modified by a lesson from it ; he was educated at an out-and-out secular Indian school ; he knows mathematics, and sciences, and literature, and politics, just as well as we do. Education without religion can give you a Nana Sahib ; it is education, saturated by the word of the living God, that will make a nation what it has made us—a land of subjects whose obedience is mingled loyalty and love ; presided over by a Sovereign whose mightiest bulwarks, and best bayonets and defence, are the affections of her people ; a land on whose wide domains the sun never sets ; a land, the roll of whose conquering drum is still the warning to the oppressor that vengeance is at his heels, and to the oppressed that deliverance is at hand.

As the last lesson, I would say, Redeem the time. You cannot recall the past, you cannot retain the

present; you may charge the hours of the future with new and intenser duties and sacrifices. And also "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all other things will be added unto you." And finally, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," of goodness, of love, of charity, "do it with all thy might, for there is no device nor work in the grave, whither we are all hasting."

LECTURE XXX.

THE HEART'S DESIRE.

Man as we find him is not at home: he cannot domesticate himself here. Dissatisfied, he longs to go where all is perfection without alloy. This grand issue is coming on the earth.

“ For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven : if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened : not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”—2 CORINTHIANS v. 2—4.

We at once perceive, from the imagery employed in this passage, that the soul is regarded as the inhabitant, perfect and complete in all its functions; and that the body, that body which the soul lives in, is likened to a garment, which may be put off without the soul being scathed, or put on again without the soul being intrinsically altered; less a part of itself, more a clothing for its progress and communication upon earth. If this be so, then death is simply the putting off of that outward garment which is here employed to describe the body, and has no more effect upon the integrity and grandeur of the immortal inhabitant within than my undressing at night has upon the integrity and perfection of the body that wears the clothes to defend it from the cold. If this idea be correct, then at death we merely disrobe; or put off the frail earthly garment that we have long worn. It may pine and waste by disease; it may be shattered by shell or shot upon the field of battle; it may be sunk into the depths of the desert sea; but all we do at death is simply to disrobe ourselves of that which is not part of ourselves, but the

mere garment that shelters and protects the soul, until that soul is ready to lay aside the robes in which it ministered as a Levite in the temple below, and to ascend and minister where it needs no such robe, in the presence of God and of the Lamb for ever. Now then, if this idea be the correct one, that the body is the simple garment in which the soul is wrapped, we learn very important lessons, lessons that will be comforting to many that are bereaved.

Man is still man, whether clothed in fur, or purple, or fine linen, or clad in miserable rags. The outer dress may be elegant, or it may be mean; it may be rich, or it may be the reverse; but the wearer is the same. Man is man in rags, or in purple and fine linen. So the soul is not touched nor altered in its value, in its intrinsic excellence and glory, by the weakness or the frailty of the body; and still less when the body is put off and laid in the grave, to wait for that day when the roll of the resurrection trumpet shall penetrate the homes of the living and the sepulchres of the dead; and the dead shall come forth, no more arrayed in the frail and clinging garments of decay, but in coronation robes; the bride having made herself ready to enter with the bridegroom into the palace of the Great King. The existence of the soul, therefore, is not bound up with the existence of the body; it may be an advantage to the soul; we know it will be so in the future; it is necessary now; but in the future, after the resurrection, it will not only be necessary, but ceasing to be a burden, it will be more useful and ornamental than before. But we can conceive, what we are sure of from the assertion of Scripture, that the soul can exist separate from the body; that it is not mutilated in its functions, or in its prerogatives, or in its powers, by the laying down of the body. The house is not the inhabitant, the clothing is not the wearer, the body is not the man; it is merely an appendage, something added to the man; and soul and body may be disintegrated and divorced, and yet life not destroyed; their connection is a contingency, not an absolute and inevitable necessity. It

is very true, and there is no doubt of this, that our present existence is such that we cannot feel the possibility of the soul existing separate from the body: they are so linked together, and the powers of the one so interpenetrate the functions of the other, that we cannot from present experience realize the possibility of the soul existing separate from the body. And yet there are moments when we can almost gather an idea of the possibility. We are immersed in thought; we are busy examining, or working out, a profound, a deep, an abstract problem. How often—I appeal to every thinker—when seated in your study, has the clock struck, have bells chimed, servants gone out and come in; and yet you have heard nothing, and recollect nothing, though you may have been seated three or four hours: all sorts of noises, from children up to visitors, have been going on, and yet you are utterly unconscious of any. What does that show? That the soul needs to disentangle itself from its earthly tenebment in order to be capable of its noblest efforts; and that there are moments when the soul seems not to lay aside, but in some degree to disburden itself of its earthly clothing, in order to rise to its loftiest flights, and think most deeply, feel most keenly, and act in all it does with greatest power. Now what is all this? A sort of dim type and prefiguration of what we are when absent from the body, but, in the language of the apostle, present with the Lord.

I proceed to bring these ideas before you, under a three-fold shape. First, let us consider man as clothed upon—that is, as having a body in this present life; secondly, let us think of man as unclothed, when he is absent from the body, and present with the Lord; and then let us, in the next place, view man in his last and perfect state, when he shall be re clothed with his resurrection and his glorified body. The three great divisions, then, of man's history are,—man clothed upon, man unclothed, and man re clothed with his robes of glory and of beauty. I have said the body is the garment of the soul: and you will mark another thought—

the body has no life in itself, as far as we know ; its life is derived from its connection with the soul. In man, at least, the moment that the soul goes, that moment the body ceases to live. But because the body ceases to live, it does not follow—and we are sure it does not follow—that the soul also ceases to live. In fact, the soul is quite independent of, and distinct from the body ; and indicates it is so in many things. The brain is not the soul ; how absurd in any one to maintain that man's soul is what is called the pineal gland ; that is, a part of the brain, which has been analyzed by chemists, and shown to be made up of phosphate of lime ! Now phosphate of lime could not write Shakspeare's dramas : phosphate of lime could not compose Milton's Paradise Lost. And the same phosphate of lime is found in animals ; and yet they do not write, nor think, nor possess the intellectual powers that man has. The truth is, the brain is to the soul precisely what the hand is to the body ; that is all. And when the brain is hurt, you say, Is not the mind—identifying the mind with the soul—affected ? I answer, No ; I do not believe it : some may doubt the thought, but I can see clearly its foundation, that in the most thorough lunatic the soul retains its integrity, as completely as in Sir Isaac Newton or John Locke. You ask, Then why is it that everything is wrong ? that he cannot exhibit the ideas, or utter the words, or do the actions of a rational and intelligent man ? I answer, The defect is not in the soul, but in the instrument through and with which it works. You see the first musician of the age placed at a piano or at a harp ; he tries to play, but there is nothing but discord. Why ? Not that the minstrel's fingers have lost their cunning, but that the instrument through which he acts is out of tune. So in the case of the lunatic ; it is not the soul within that has lost its mighty functions, but it is the instrument through which it makes music in the ear of a listening world that will not respond, and execute its high behests. The brain influences the nerve, the nerve influences the muscle ; but all this is but the complicated machinery through

which the soul acts on this world. In a higher sphere, the machinery may be dissolved, the garment thrown off, and the soul will then and there be able to act without a medium of matter or of flesh at all. While this is true, it cannot be doubted that, in our present condition, the body, though an instrument, does colour all the decisions, the feelings, the thoughts, the actions of the soul. In the resurrection state, the body will be the exact exponent of inner thought, inner desire, inner feeling; because the body then will be perfect: but in our present state, the body is so far the exponent of what the mind thinks, what the will resolves what the heart feels; but then, sin having crept into this outer garment of clay—the moth having fretted and injured this exquisitely woven texture—you find now that the body gives its colouring to your thoughts: in the language of St. Paul, you find a law in the members warring against, instead of carrying out the law of the mind; so that an apostle, under a deep sense of that disastrous influence, exclaimed in his agony, “Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?” Now, in the resurrection state, as I shall show, the body will be the exact expression of what is in the mind, the heart, and the will; and in this world it would be so, were it not that the body is crippled, diseased, defiled: but when all this defilement shall be removed—when all its imperfections shall be taken away—when the dim mists that now cover the eye shall be dissolved—when the gray hairs shall again be restored to their original colour—when strength, and vigour, and beauty, and immortality shall all be together the resplendent prerogatives of the resuscitated raiment; then man’s mind will find a meet channel for its expressions, and we shall then see no more, nor think any more through a glass darkly, but face to face.

So much for our first condition—“clothed upon.” Let me now look at the second—unclothed. Now this condition, unclothed, comes—who can possibly doubt or deny it?—nearer and nearer every day. Every ache that you feel, every feebleness of which you are con-

scious, all show that the vital force is being exhausted by wear and tear; and that the tide of life is ebbing from the shores of the senses on which it has so long, and so divinely beaten. Disease touches the springs of one; old age wears out the vigour and exhausts the energy of another; and by-and-by we drop the garment no longer fit for us to wear, and we do not follow it, but leave it in the grave, and ascend unclothed to the presence of our Father and Christ's Father, of our God and Christ's God. This idea then shows, in the second place, that when a Christian dies he merely takes off his garment. When you lie down at night to sleep, and undress, you do not leave with your dress any portion of the body; the body retains its perfection and integrity. And when you lay down your dress in the last wardrobe of all, the grave, the soul does not go with the body, but leaves it there in the hope of the resurrection from the dead, and goes unclothed into the presence of Him who is a Spirit, and who is worshipped in spirit and in truth. Hence, those who we say in human language die, merely throw off the outer robe in which they have ministered in the world; they lay aside not life, but its restraints; they do not cease to be, they only cease from being seen; they do not leave life, they only leave us; they retain conscience, memory, with all its sweet and its hallowed recollections, sensibility, intellect, thought; they may see us, though we cannot see them; we are said to be surrounded with a great cloud of witnesses, and that cloud of witnesses is said to be the spectators of the race; and there is in this one incentive to whatsoever things are pure, and just, and lovely, that not only love to Him that has redeemed us, but the recollection of those that have left us, should stimulate our hearts to run the race set before us with patience, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. Of those then that have laid the garment of the body in the grave, these are the thoughts and the only descriptions we need. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." "I desire," says Paul, "to depart, and be with Christ." No purgatorial torment between; no

insensibility, as some are trying to show, between ; but the instant the garment is laid in the grave, that instant the wearer has entered into the conscious glory of his blessed Lord. And this very thought should teach us that it is not so terrible a thing after all to die. True, we have worn the robe long that has well fitted us, and we should like to wear it still, if it will only hang together ; true, we have lived in a house, every nook, and corner, and room of which we are familiar with, and we would like to live in it still ; but the rains enter here, and the winds blow in there, and the walls are decaying elsewhere ; and we must leave it, whether we like it or not. And so when we die, it is simply the last time we undress upon earth, that is all ; and the indestructible thought goes with me, almost like a note of the resurrection voice, that I do not suffer, I do not become insensible, I do not go down to the grave ; on the contrary, I am more conscious of my powers, feel loftier and grander capabilities than ever ; and when I have laid down the garment of the body, I have but laid down the limits and restrictions on my actions, and shall never feel so free as when I am unclothed upon, and death is swallowed up of life.

This leads me, therefore, in the third place, to notice the fact that one day, a day the distance or the nearness of which no arithmetic of ours can calculate, we shall be re clothed. We are here clothed, but with bodies that sin has defiled, and weakened, and rendered imperfect vehicles of our volition ; we are, till the resurrection, unclothed ; that is to say, we are present with Christ, but we have no body ; but when the resurrection comes, then we are told here, in the language of the apostle, we shall be clothed upon. What a glorious thought is that ! we leave the frail, tainted garment upon earth, every thread of which is tinged with sin ; we leave it in the grave, where it lies the pledge and the prophecy that we shall return with Christ, and resume it, not another, but a new body ; this mortal having put on immortality. It matters not where the body is deposited, for every atom of its dust is in the keeping of the Son of God ; whether it lie under a marble mausoleum, or

beneath a monument of bronze, or in the depths of the largest Pyramid, or be sunk in the desert sea, the grave of empires and of individuals ; or if it be shattered, and torn, and buried where it fell upon the battle-field, it matters not ; every atom is in the keeping of Christ ; as closely watched, as thoroughly taken care of, as if it were already glorified, and amid the splendours and the glories of the beatific vision. "This very mortal shall put on immortality ; this very corruptible shall put on incorruptibility." The apostle's reasoning is most remarkable ; he was himself, as everybody knows, a diminutive and a deformed man ; and when he uttered these words—for he preached them as well as wrote them—he laid his hand upon his breast, so unprophectic of aught that was grand, and he said, "This very mortal shall put on immortality ; this very corruptible shall put on incorruptibility, and death shall be swallowed up in victory ; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption ; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body ;" not a spirit, but a spiritual body. And therefore we see the resurrection is not the elimination from the great mass of the earth of a body of some sort for each ; it is not the extraction of indefinite humanity for each individual soul ; but it is the resurrection of that very body that you laid in the grave ; and its re-investment with a glory, a perfection, and a beauty, which Adam and Eve, when they came forth from the plastic hands of God, never realized. So real is this, that there is not one feature that lies hidden in the shadow of death that shall not come out, and be reproduced in the living countenance in all its perfection at the resurrection morn ; there is not one tone that has been like music beneath your roof tree, that peculiar tone in each man's voice by which I can distinguish individuals better than by the features that I look on, that shall not be resuscitated, only in more musical and beautiful reverberations ; there shall be nothing in those you call dead peculiar to them as individuals, constituting what we call their idiosyncrasy, that shall not be resuscitated, purified, beautified, glorified ; so that the mother shall know her infant then better than she knew

it on earth, and the sister shall know her sister, and the father shall know his child, and the child shall know his father, far more perfectly than before. There is something wrong in our present state, that prevents the countenance from being the full expression of what is going on within. I have noticed, as I have gazed on the face of the dead, that five or six or twelve hours after death the features resume a calm and composure that tempts the nearest and the dearest to say, "He is more like himself than he ever was before." What is that? The battle is finished, the struggle is done; the conflict between an imperfect body that imperfectly reflects the volitions of the mind, and the mind ever anxious to speak out its true thoughts, is ended; and it drops into that soft and beautiful repose of victory that is a dim prefiguration of that day when it shall rise in unknown beauty and perfection, and be the bright clothing for the immortal and the glorified soul.

This thought is so precious in the mind of the apostle, that throughout the whole New Testament the Christian is represented as longing for his resurrection. "Not," he says, "that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon;" not that we have any pleasure in dying; a person can have no pleasure in feeling a prick in his finger, a sting in his hand: and so death is pain; death is unnatural; it is superinduced by sin. And therefore the apostle says, "Not that we would be unclothed upon;" but we are willing to go through the painful process, for the sake of the splendid glory that shall be revealed; we are willing to wade the deep, cold, and chilling stream for the sake of the sweet sunshine that lies upon the mountain beyond; we are willing to be unclothed, that we may get rid of this impediment to our best and holiest purposes; and that we may be clothed upon with the glorious exponent of all we think and feel, which will be perfect. And, hence, throughout the New Testament, we read that God's people groan within themselves, waiting for the redemption of the body—not the creation of a body—but the redemption of the body.

From these three facts, man clothed in this mortal life, as he is ; secondly, man unclothed, when he leaves it, and enters into the presence of God ; and thirdly, man re clothed upon, we gather some useful and comforting lessons. First, what you intrust to the grave is not your father, nor your mother, nor your sister, nor your son ; you intrust to its keeping only the no longer useful garment that your son, your daughter, your sister, your mother, your father, have left behind them. The grave has not them in its keeping ; it has only this garment which they have cast away, to wait in heaven for that better and more beautiful apparel which Christ, the resurrection and the life, will provide. In the second place, those we call dead are really and truly more alive, if I may so speak, than we. The Christian that we call dead, truly and nobly lives. Then what is the change that takes place ? Our dead may at this moment be nearer us than our friends across the Tweed, or across the Channel, or in India, or in America ; they may be nearer to us than our next-door neighbours. But what is the reason that we cannot communicate with them ? Two friends are corresponding between different lands ; some mischievous person, or some accident snaps the working wire ; there is the machinery at the one end, there is the machinery at the other ; there are the waiting friends, but there is no communication. Why ? The medium of the communication has been interrupted, that is all ; and the minute that it is restored, the communication that was suspended is restored also. Well, the difference between our dead and us is just this : we cannot now speak to them, and they cannot speak to us ; we cannot communicate with them—Why ? Because the body is essential to communion between spirit and spirit in this present state of life. All that has been interrupted is the medium of communication. But your dead son, your dead sister, lives as truly as you do ; only the body, that is necessary in our present condition as a medium of communication, has been dissolved and laid in the grave ; and, therefore, communion cannot be maintained ; sweet words of friendship cannot be re-

ciprocated; kind looks of welcome cannot be transmitted; you must wait till both are reclothed upon with that body that is from heaven. How injurious is it in this life to dwell only upon what we see and what we hear! You do not estimate a friend's excellence by the richness of the clothes she wears, or the jewels by which she is adorned; these are not the person. And so you must not estimate a friend, or those with whom you are associated in life, by the beauty or the perfection of the material garment that they wear. There is attraction in beauty; there must be whilst sense and sight gaze upon these things; but the true Christian must look beyond or penetrate these, and see an adorning far more beautiful than gold, and silver, and pearls, and precious stones; namely, the hidden man of the heart, which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price. Supreme devotion to what relates to the body, ministers to and gratifies its tastes, should never be the dominant thought of man. In other words, we must think what we shall eat and what we shall drink; but the sin is in thinking with too absorbing a thought what we shall eat and what we shall drink. We must think, and we must premeditate wherewithal we shall be clothed; but the sin lies in thinking too much about it. And hence an enlightened man looks down with contemptuous pity upon those who seem to regard their raiment as their chief ornament; and whose only worth seems to be that of the cinnamon-tree, the excellence of which is in the bark, not in the wood or fruit; and whose personality seems to be absorbed in what they wear and in what they stand upright in. But if you look down with contemptuous pity upon such, it is only one stage higher, if indeed it be higher, if the whole of your thought is absorbed about what shall adorn the body, what shall minister to its tastes. When all these things, which are necessary in their place, are made predominant and absorbing, then man falls from his grandeur as an immortal, and sinks down to the level of the very brutes that perish.

Do we not learn from all this the vast importance of seeking to adorn the soul? I do not believe in what is called physical plainness of face; let there be an illuminated mind, let there be a meek, gentle, holy heart; let there be contentment within; and the countenance will be irradiated with a beauty that no arrangement of flesh and blood can possibly communicate. Let me remind you, all you lay out upon the body is a bad investment; it must all be consigned to the worm and the grave. Not one atom of what you lay out in pampering its appetites, in ministering to its tastes, in clothing and beautifying it—not one particle of that will ever be raised again at the resurrection day. But, on the other hand, what you lay out upon the soul—if I speak to merchants I touch a chord that must vibrate in your hearts—what you lay out upon the soul is a thoroughly sure, ever increasing, ever growing investment; all that you have shed upon it of beauty, all that you have trained in it of excellence; all that you have added to that soul of embellishment; every holy bias you have given it; every holy affection you have kindled in it, will all appear again in perfection. Oh! miserable men, who are investing their all in the flesh that must be laid aside in the grave; and investing nothing, where investment is eternal, in that soul that liveth for ever and ever. “What shall it profit a man if he gain”—which is not certain—“the whole world, and lose his own soul?” These thoughts mitigate, in the case of mourners, all the painful thoughts that they often feel about the grave. The heart of the weeper longs to know where and what their departed are. They know the fact that they live; they do not know how they live. And what a picture gallery is the memory of many a Christian upon earth, stored with the images of them that have gone—images that they value more than all the master-pieces of Europe—but, blessed thought, images in the memory that are prophets of the restoration of their holy and beloved originals. What therefore we know about those that are gone is this—that, at least, they are happy,

in glory, safe in Christ here; they all and obey the which is perfect happiness in heaven. A ranch is in lightful then that the seeds we have cast into. "Not shall grow again; that the voices whose tones the in our ears shall be heard again, and that every a be of dust shall come forth the instant that Christ's voice penetrates the recesses of the grave, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment!" All that pain has wrestled with, all that disease has disfigured, all that decay has transmuted, shall emerge again in beauty and perfection. Death has gleaned the treasure, transplanted the flower, reaped the wheat; but not one portion of the treasure shall be lost, not one flower that death has laid in the grave shall be withered or faded; not one thing you call your own but shall appear again. Happy thought, blessed expectancy for the people of God! Earth's palaces part with their glory every day; earth's riches take wings and flee away; but all the good that we do, still more all the good that, by the inspiration of the Spirit, we accumulate within—faith, patience, gentleness, meekness, charity, love, hope—shall all be resuscitated; and we once clothed upon on earth, weeping because of the imperfections of our clothing; unclothed upon in heaven, and waiting and hoping for the resurrection day; we shall be re clothed again in that glorious garment which shall never be laid aside, but worn as a trophy of what Christ has purchased, and what his word has promised—the meet companion of a holy, happy, and glorified soul.

Let us then be less concerned about the cares of time; more deeply and solemnly ponder the realities of a world to come. Day by day, one after another is dropping into the tomb; whose turn will it be next? What is it that keeps ever beating that thing we call the heart? I have often told you it cannot be explained except by this; God gives it its every pulse; God's finger keeps it going. When He shall bid it stop, when He shall withdraw his touch, He only knows; but this lesson is ever for us, "Be ye ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Master cometh."

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XXXI.

RESURRECTION.

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 PHILIPPIANS iii. 11.

part of the chapter, as we
 lions he enjoyed as a Jew :—
 day ;” and therefore no cere-
 the tribe of Benjamin,”—the
 mony was wanting. The
 noblest of the twelve ; “an Hebrew of the Hebrews,”—
 without the least admixture of Gentile blood ; “as
 touching the law,” one of the most popular and digni-
 fied sects, “a Pharisee.” As to conduct, it was perfectly
 consistent with these proud pretensions. My zeal was
 displayed in persecuting the detested Christians ; and as
 to the righteousness which has come from fasting, pay-
 ing tithes, observing the feasts, the rubric, and the
 rituals of the law,—in that respect, I was perfectly
 blameless. But how altered ! “What things were
 gain to me,” those things I thought to be aids and im-
 pulses to my course to heaven ; those things which I
 thought would weigh so heavily in the scale in my
 favour, I have now learned by the teaching of the
 Spirit of God to count—what Paul counted the cargo
 in his vessel when it was tossed in the storm—to be
 loss ; so that I fling all overboard, and regard it as truly
 worthless in comparison of the excellency of Christ
 Jesus my Lord.

This conclusion, he says, is not a rash one, rashly
 taken up to be rashly laid down ; for I have experience
 of the cross, “I have suffered the loss of all things,”
 —honour, rank, dignity, prospect, preferment—I have
 suffered the loss of all. Do I regret it ? Just the
 reverse. Instead of wishing I had never made the
 exchange, I rejoice in it. Did you ever hear any man
 regret that he had sacrificed that which he loved most,

in order that he might love, and know, and obey the Saviour, "and be found in Him,"—as a branch is in the vine, as a living member is in the body? "Not having his own righteousness," whether it be the righteousness that preceded his conversion, in which he was blameless, or the righteousness which succeeded his conversion, in his sanctification and conformity to God's law; not having that—it is what he cannot trust in—"it is of the law; but that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ,"—a righteousness not produced by him, but received by him; a righteousness perfect on its reception, incapable of increase, and proof against decrease; "the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him,"—as if his past knowledge of Him was but the twilight of a brighter knowledge that was to come. A Christian's progress in the knowledge of Christ is endless; "and the power of his resurrection, and even the fellowship of his sufferings," I am willing to take part in all respects. In short, I am willing to be conformed to his death, to be crucified, if it be for his glory, and for the good of his people. And then he adds, "If by any means"—any amount of suffering, any amount of trial, any amount of toil—"I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Let me notice the three great resurrections,—first, the resurrection of Christ; next, the resurrection of his people; and thirdly, the peculiar and emphatic resurrection which Paul laboured that he might attain to: and I should just like to add how large a portion of Scripture the resurrection of Christ occupies, as well as our own.

The resurrection of Christ was foretold by the ancient prophets. Psalm xvi. 10: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Isaiah xxvi. 19: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

His resurrection was foretold by himself. Matthew

xx. 19: "They shall deliver the Son of man to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again." The Pharisees themselves admitted that Christ predicted his own resurrection; for they came to Pilate, and said, "That deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." You have, therefore, our Lord's prediction of it most explicit.

This resurrection of Christ is said to have taken place by the power of God the Father. Acts ii. 24: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Romans viii. 11: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

It is said, in the next place, to have taken place by Christ's own power: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. I have power to lay down my life, and power to take it again." Now, this is the most wonderful statement of all. One can understand that a dead man should be raised by an Omnipotent God external to him; but one cannot understand, in the common knowledge and experience of life, that a dead man should raise himself. The fact that he is dead implies inability. The fact that Christ raised himself from the dead is one of the grand evidences of his own Deity.

He is said, in the next place, to have been raised by the Holy Ghost: "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

The resurrection of Christ was attested by angels: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not dead, but risen."

His resurrection was attested by the apostles: Acts i. 22: "One must be ordained to be a witness with us of Christ's resurrection." Acts ii. 32: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

The same resurrection too is attested by his very enemies; for, you will observe, the chief priests and

scribes admitted the fact that He was gone, that the tomb was empty, and that the dead one laid in it was removed; but they tried to explain the fact on principles which look at the first blush extremely satisfactory, but which needed only to be analyzed in order to demonstrate how untenable they were. There was placed around the grave of Jesus a battalion of Roman soldiers. The night on which Christ is said to have risen from the dead, was a moonlight night, as it can be demonstrated alike from Jewish customs and from historical facts. Not only so; but that night was one of the great festivals of Jerusalem, when the whole heart of that mighty metropolis heaved, as it were, with joy; and the teeming crowds that came into it were so overwhelming that they had to spread tents and booths in the streets and lanes and fields for miles about the capital, in order to have room for the gigantic population that rushed into Jerusalem at one of its grandest festivals. Now, it was alleged by the Pharisees, the scribes, and the high priests, that Christ's body was stolen by his disciples, who entered into a conspiracy for the purpose. It was asserted that they called the soldiers, and they bade the soldiers say that Christ's body was stolen by his disciples.

To show you how strong, for here we can only give you a specimen, are the proofs and credentials of this great fact in our common Christianity, first observe the impossibility that the soldiers could have slept, as they were bribed to say, and yet escape the punishment of death, which, by the martial law of Rome, was instantly inflicted on the soldier who slept at his post. If the soldiers had slept, and they were made to say they had, they confessed their crime. Why were they not punished?

Again, if the soldiers slept, is it not miraculous that some twenty, or thirty, or forty, or fifty men should all have slept exactly at the same moment? And is it not equally remarkable that all these fifty men, who happened to sleep exactly at the same moment, were not punished when they told their offence? That the apostles should have come—men of no experience, of

no great tact, as their past history shows—and should have rolled away a massive stone, that would have taken some dozen of men to move, and should have rolled it away without some machinery, or at least without noise, and should have done it so deliberately that they descended into the empty tomb, after lifting the body out of it, and rolled the linen clothes aside, wrapt them up, and laid them quietly in a corner; should have carried that body out in a bright moonlight night, when all the streets were lined with men, on foot, in tents or in booths; should have carried it through the streets, teeming and heaving with a vast population; and in a bright moonlight night have so cleverly concealed it that no witness saw it; and should have defied the police, who were instructed to make the most rigid inquiry where it was,—I say, to suppose all these things to occur at that very time, requires the sceptic to suppose a miracle almost equal to the miracle of the resurrection. We are, therefore, satisfied that the evidence adduced by the scribes and Pharisees is most untenable: not that we need it to be disproved, but only that we should always be able to render a reason for the faith that is in us.

This great fact of the resurrection of Christ was the doctrine of the Old Testament Scriptures themselves. I have shown that it was the doctrine of the Old Testament Scriptures, foretold by the prophets, foretold by himself, attested by angels, attested by the apostles, attested by his enemies. He was raised by his own power, raised by the Spirit, raised by the Father.

What doctrines, or what truths are established by the fact of Christ's resurrection? Again I take you to the Scriptures. It is declared to be a proof of his Deity. Declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead."

He was raised, we are told, for our justification. Romans iv. 25: "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Again, Romans viii. 34: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again,

who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

The resurrection of Christ is stated as an emblem of our regeneration. Romans vi. 4: "As Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

It is alleged, in the next place, to be the first-fruits of our resurrection. Acts xxvi. 23: "That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead." 1 Corinthians xv. 13, 20: "If there be no resurrection from the dead, then is Christ not risen: but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

It is also associated with our hope. 1 Peter i. 3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

We are told also in Acts i. 3, and by John, that by many conclusive proofs He was known to have risen, and that to many "he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days."

By these we have then the fact of Christ's resurrection, and the doctrines on which the Scriptures lean and from which they derive their nutriment.

Let me notice, in the next place, the resurrection of believers as the result of Christ's resurrection. We are told clearly in Scripture, that because Christ died and rose again, therefore we shall rise again. There are some who, in most learned and most able notes, deny, like the German rationalist divines, that there is to be literally and strictly a resurrection. They say that it is all figurative, and that it does not mean literally the resurrection of the body. Now, the language of Scripture is very explicit. "The hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth: they that have done good to the resurrection of heaven; they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation." Here is a positive assertion of the resurrection of the

body. Again, that it is the very same bodies that are to rise is plain from the word "resurrection." It comes from "resurgo," to rise again. If the bodies of all believers are not all raised, but new bodies are created, then the language is misapplied: it would not be a resurrection; it would be a new creation. The apostle calls it in the first epistle to the Corinthians a "mystery." It would be no mystery at all to give us new bodies; but it is a mystery that our dead dust should become quickened with new life, and that that dust should be reconstructed in more than its pristine beauty and glory, and made a resplendent dwelling-place for the redeemed and regenerated soul.

But it is objected, that science leads us to a contrary conclusion; that we have no experience of the thing, and that we have no reason to anticipate such a result. It seems really the reverse; the ripest science leads to the conclusion that the resurrection is possible. I am about to give an illustrative analogy, not an evidence of the resurrection. Take the conclusion now universally admitted, that there is no such a thing as annihilation. When, for instance, wood or coal is burned in your grate, it is not annihilated, it has only changed its structure by having assumed the shape of a gaseous body, and it exists in all its completeness only under other names, and with other appearances, in another relation, and probably incorporated into other elements. We know of no such phenomenon as annihilation. A seed is cast into the earth, that seed grows up into flax, the flax ripens into flowers or fruit; that again is prepared, and made into linen; that linen is worn out; and after being torn into rags, it is turned into paper; that paper is written upon—it is thrown into the fire; and that first seed of the flax has changed itself over and over again; but all its constituent elements are all there, with other elements added; it is not annihilated, it has only changed its form; so that science shows that change of structure is the great law, not annihilation. All this supports, not opposes, the doctrine of the resurrection.

All things are possible with God, except to lie; but

there is no lie or deception here. He tells us literally that it will be so. If a chemist living in the present day can take a substance, submit it to his tests, and resolve that substance into its pristine elements ; and if he be in pursuit of any particular poison, be it arsenic, or prussic acid, or other deadly compound, he can hunt it out of all its retreats and combinations, even after it has entered into the animal tissues, and can bring forth the object of research in all its integrity just as it was before, shall we think it impossible that the great Maker, the Architect, the Chemist, if I may use the expression reverently, of the whole universe, will be able to trace out the constituent elements of each once living body, and bring those elements, dust to dust, atom to atom, bone to bone, till the whole earth is covered with an army of resurrection, living, and responsible men? He will speak to the distant streams of the earth, and each stream will send forth its dead. His voice will be heard in the silent caverns of the Pyramids of Egypt, and the Pharaohs that are sleeping there will come forth. His word will sound in the remotest deserts of Africa and Asia, and they that have the sands for their winding-sheet, and solitude as their only companion, shall come forth. He will call to those that are beneath the green sod, and that sod will lift itself aside and let God's prisoners of hope come forth. The very dust on which we now tread will become instinct with vitality ; and the awful fact will then be seen, as we now admit, that on the very ground on which we now tread—every inch of this great metropolis—the numbers that are below it far outnumber those that are above it ; and the mighty population that shall come forth from these spots on which we now are, will prove at that day alike the truth of the resurrection from the dead, and the faithfulness and power of Him, whose voice they shall hear, and come forth. Thus, the resurrection of the dead seems not at all improbable in whatever light we look at it.

But let us notice the facts connected with it, and the evidence of it drawn from Scripture.

First, this resurrection will consist of two great classes. They are called the just and the unjust; they that have done good, and they that have done evil. And there will then be but two great characters. All the drapery of outward circumstance will be left behind; there will be but two vast classes, they that have done good, and they that have done evil. Every other distinction will be lost; every other accidental characteristic will have vanished; every discrimination, ecclesiastical, national, social, will be merged and lost in that one which was first, and shall be last, and must be for ever, the just, and the unjust. The king cannot carry his crown with him; the beggar will not take his rags with him; both shall appear, each in his category, among the just that live and rejoice, or with the unjust, that suffer for ever and for ever. The patriarchs of ancient times, and the babes of yesterday; Adam and all his mighty family shall then and there hear the voice of the Son of man, and come forth. "They that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation."

This was the doctrine of the Old Testament. Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that in my flesh I shall see God." In Psalm xlix. 15: David knew "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me." Daniel says, "Many that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt."

The resurrection was expected by the most enlightened Jews. There was Martha, who had heard little of the resurrection, as we are taught to contemplate it; yet she said, "I know that my brother shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." The great doctrine which the Sadducees objected to, and the preaching, at which they gnashed their teeth, was the resurrection of the dead. We have in Scripture, too, individual instances of it,—Christ the first-fruits, the son of the widow of Nain, and the raising of Lazarus. All these prove that this truth is a doctrine of Scripture, and a truth taught by our blessed Lord.

But the language of Paul in this present verse is very emphatic, and very peculiar. He says, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Why, how could he escape it? We have just heard that all shall rise. The just and the unjust, the greatest criminal and the greatest saint, shall equally rise from the dead in resurrection bodies. Then what does the apostle mean when he says, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead?" The only way in which we can explain it is by that supposition, or rather historical statement, impugned by some, but, I think, unequivocally established by others, that the resurrection, while it is of the just and of the unjust, yet implies an interval between the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust. In other words, it can only be explained, I conceive, by admitting what I cannot escape from on impartially reading the Scriptures, that there is a first resurrection, consisting exclusively of the just; and that there is a second resurrection, composed solely of the unjust. Let me refer to the passage contained in the 20th chapter of the book of Revelation, and see if it cast any light upon the subject on which I am now commenting. It says, "I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the

first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." The reply to this may be, " But all this is figurative." " You do not mean," it is argued by those who do not hold a distinction in the resurrection of the dead, " You do not mean to assert that there will be literally a key, and literally a great chain, and literally Satan bound with its links for a thousand years. And if you do not literally interpret the first verse"—and the imagery I have read is figurative—" you are bound to interpret the sequel, namely, the first and second resurrections, figuratively also." If it was stated similarly, as the imagery in which the first verse is given, without any explanation, then perhaps their construction would be the most probable. But you will observe, that when the whole thing is stated, and when it has been said that the rest of the dead lived not again, but that the first section of the dead reigned with Christ a thousand years, it is added, " This is the first resurrection." Is not this the explanatory literal remark upon the figurative imagery employed in the preceding part of the chapter? Just as, " I saw seven golden candlesticks ; and in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of man." Now, what is added? " The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." That is the literal clause thrown in to explain the figurative language that has been employed. So, by parity of reasoning, this clause, " This is the first resurrection," is the literal clause thrown in to explain the imagery that has been employed in the previous part of the chapter ; and, therefore, that the first resurrection is literal, and that the rest of the dead shall not rise again until the thousand years have been finished. It has been argued by those who oppose this view, that all this is to be regarded as figurative. But at the close of the chapter there is an account of the resurrection which the very opponents of my view of the first resurrection allow to be literal, namely, at the 12th

verse of this 20th chapter of the book of Revelation : "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened : and another book was opened, which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Now, they all say, This is literal. But is it not very fair to say, If the first be figurative, the second must be figurative too ; if the first be literal, the last must be literal too ? You must not say, This is figurative, just when it suits a previous conclusion ; and, That is literal, just because it suits another previous conclusion. Take the parts that are avowedly literal, as I conceive, in the chapter, and accept the whole as such ; or admit that both are figurative, and then you must conclude with the German rationalist divines, that there is not a literal resurrection of the dead at all. If the first is literal, the last is literal too.

But the original language is extremely peculiar. When the apostles, or our Lord, speak of the resurrection of the dead, the words that are used are *ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν*, "the resurrection of the dead." But in all those passages, which by their very context are proved to refer to a special resurrection, the words are as follow : Luke xiv. 14, *ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει τῶν δικαίων*, "the resurrection of the just," a distinct one. Luke xx. 35, *τῆς ἀναστάσεως τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν*, "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead ;" but it is, literally translated, "that distinctive resurrection from the dead," *τῆς ἀναστάσεως,—τῆς*, "that emphatic one,"—*ἐκ νεκρῶν* "that resurrection," "that special or distinctive one from among the dead." Again, in John v. 29, *εἰς ἀνάστασιν ζωῆς*, "unto the resurrection of life." And in the very passage on which I am commenting, the same remarkable distinction is observed, "If by any means I might attain, *εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τῶν νεκρῶν*, having the very same *ἐξ*. If this were the common resurrection of all, there is no reason for the apostle having any doubt at all about its certainty ; but if it be the first resurrection which is

at the commencement of the Millennium, and just when Christ comes, and not the resurrection which is at the close of the Millennium, then there is meaning in the language of the apostle, "If by any means I might attain," not unto the resurrection at the close of the Millennium, but unto the resurrection of those who are raised at the commencement of the Millennium. So, in Revelation xx. 5, the same words are used; *Αὕτη ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη*, "this is that resurrection, that first resurrection, that chief or distinctive one." Now, wherever the context shows that the resurrection was an object of hope, of desire, of ambition, invariably the preposition *ἐκ* occurs, and denotes a resurrection out of the dead, the rest of the dead living not till after the thousand years.

If you feel the interval between the two resurrections of the dead seems long in 1 Cor. xv. 23, I refer you to the passage, "Every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Well, He who was the first-fruits rose 1800 years ago; they that are his will be raised very soon, when the Lord comes. "Then cometh the end," that is, the end of the thousand years. And as there is an interval of 1800 years between "Christ the first-fruits," and the resurrection of them "that are Christ's at his coming;" so there may be an interval between "they that are Christ's at his coming," and those that did not live until the thousand years were finished.

It thus appears irresistibly evident that there are two distinct resurrections; the first, the resurrection of the saints, those that believe; the second, the resurrection of the unjust, or those that believe not. It may be that in ten, in twenty, in thirty,—we know not in how many years, the Lord shall come; but the instant He comes, "we which are alive," says the apostle in another passage I might have quoted, "and remain, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air: the dead in Christ shall rise first." The instant Christ comes, every dead saint, wherever buried, shall hear his voice, and come forth; every living saint, wherever he is, shall recognize

that royal sound, and go out to meet Him. . What an awful separation will there be! One grave, in which there are twain, will throw up one, and the other will remain. One family will see one, drawn by a mysterious attraction, go forth to meet the Lord, and the rest remain behind. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in this first resurrection; sad and sorrowful is the state of him who has no lot, nor share, nor part in it. Then our bodies, as the bodies of the just, will be made meet for the glorious spirits that have been redeemed by the Saviour's blood; and when every eye shall see Him, and they that pierced Him, we can say, "Whom, having not seen, we love; in whom, though at present we see him not; yet then we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." No wonder then that the apostle Paul prizes this attainment, "If by any means I might attain;" I am willing to sacrifice wealth, honour, credit, health, life, "if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead."

Do we thus anticipate it? Do we thus desire it? Do we look forward to it as the coronal of our hopes, as the great object of our ambition, for which, and on account of which, we are ready to sacrifice all things? The way to it is Christ; the means to it are prayer, painstaking, sacrifice, toil. And if you feel that prospect magnificent, even as the apostle felt it, you will long and pray that by any means God in his wisdom may appoint, you may attain unto the resurrection from among the dead. Then shall we behold Him as He is, then shall we be satisfied with his likeness, then shall we be as the angels in heaven, then shall we know no more sorrow, nor tears, nor cares, nor mourning; then shall we meet those that have fallen asleep in Christ, recognizing them, and they recognizing us, and both rejoicing as an holy and happy family to be ever with the Lord; then shall we be able, even now are we able to, say,

" Grave, the guardian of our dust,
Grave, the treasury of the skies;
Every atom of thy dust
Rests in hope again to rise.

"Hark! the judgment trumpet calls,
Soul, rebuild thy house of clay;
Immortality its walls,
And eternity its day."

Is this your hope? If it be your faith that Christ died for you—that your sins are washed away in his blood—that you have been accepted in his name—then you prove his acceptance by imitating his holy and his blessed example. This glorious hope is based upon living faith. There can be no Easter Sabbath without a previous Friday of sorrow and of suffering. There is no way to the crown, but the way of the cross. There is no well-founded hope of everlasting life, except on the blood, the death, and sacrifice of Christ Jesus. Have you then believed on Him? Have you committed your souls to Him? Are you living under a sense of real, vital, influential, constraining religion? Christianity is not a Sabbath-day profession, but a week-day life. It is not a form, but power; it is not a name, but life. And that man who has no well-founded hope for believing that his sins have been forgiven, through Christ's blood, has no clear evidence that he shall be found in that resurrection,—that resurrection from among the dead, of which it is said, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in it."

LECTURE XXXII.

THE BLESSED AND HOLY PART.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

—REVELATION XX. 6.

THERE is in the minds of us all a lurking notion, even in those who do not accept it, that there is something in matter, in our corporeal nature—in the earth, in all the things connected with the earth—essentially and intrinsically sinful. When you hear of dwelling in a literal world, or of the body being raised and your living in it, and that body being admitted into a state of perfect happiness ; the question does occur to most, whether welcome or not, how can this vile body be admitted into that holy, holy, holy presence ? All of us retain something of the old gnostic, Gentile, or rather heathen philosophy, that spirit was made by God, that matter was made by the devil ; that the two are antagonists, and never can dwell together ; and that the body is the prison of the soul, and must be annihilated in order that the glorious inhabitant within may emerge, and enjoy the full blessedness of them that are for ever with God. The consequence is, that in many minds the state of the happy dead is so etherealized that they cannot appreciate or comprehend it. In the daily preaching of some most excellent ministers, whose exhibition of the Gospel is powerful, and full, and faithful, this thought is implied. But we must all of us learn not to accept what doctors say, nor what rabbis believe ; but to appeal to this divine book, for we are Protestants ; what is here is everlasting truth, if the whole world should denounce it ; what is not here is not necessary for any man to believe in order to salvation. Now let me show you, in the first place, that

your idea about matter cannot be correct ; for matter, in all its multitudinous developments, is as much the creature of God as the holiest seraph that wings his flight and sings beside the throne of Deity. God made the stars of the sky, the flowers of the earth, the waters of the deep sea, and the streams of all earth's rivers. And if God made all things visible and material which we see, and touch, and handle, will you believe that a holy God made matter originally tainted, poisoned, polluted ; having in it the seeds of disease, decay, disorder, and discord, and finally of death—can we believe that ? If God made matter so, He made sin ; and if He made sin, how can we reconcile his constant denunciation of it ; or his declaration that He will extirpate and banish it from his world for ever ? Does He hate what He himself made ? Does He war against what He himself introduced ? The idea is absurd ; the contradiction is too gross to be for one moment entertained. Does not all the teaching of Scripture, on the contrary, demonstrate that all creation, this orb, and that sky, and those stars, and these flowers, and that great sea, were all made originally holy, perfect, harmonious, pure ; and that sin is a subsequent interpolation ; that it is an after-creation intrusion ? Whence it came, why it came, are questions I cannot solve, and need not discuss ; but the fact that sin was introduced after the earth was made is not only probable, but appears upon every page of God's blessed book. If sin was introduced after creation, and if sin be not part and parcel of the original constitution of creation, then sin is not an essential part of God's creation. Do you think disease is an essential part of my body ? that blindness, deafness, paralysis, decay, death, were ever made originally with the construction of my nature ? They are imperfections, the fruits of sin, and subsequently introduced, and were not made by God. I was no more made to die than the angels in glory ; I was made immortal, holy, happy ; and whatever of disease, whatever of ache, whatever of decay are felt in me, are not from God, and Him I cannot blame : they are simply from myself ; that is, from the

creature. But, blessed thought! they are destined to be expunged; God will purify the creature He made once so holy; and earth restored will be a grander spectacle than earth as originally created, and its last Paradise will be a more brilliant scene than that first glory with which time dawned and in which Adam dwelt. Then, if this be true, that sin is an interpolation, let me ask, is there any difficulty in supposing that God will eliminate from my nature that which has infected it? Is man, for instance, able to purify the infected dwelling; is he able to detach decay, and arrest it; is he able, by the most sifting and exquisite analysis, to trace the retreats and the hiding-places of the subtle poison that has been introduced into the body; and literally to bring up from the grave the evidences of the poisoner's guilt and criminality? Is man able to do all this; and shall Omnipotence be unable to extract the poison from the work it made? Shall Omniscience fail in tracking through all its windings the evil that has been introduced? Shall He who expelled the leprosy, who opened the blind eye, who arrested the corruption of the grave, and brought forth the dead, living and happy, to mingle again with living men;—shall He be unable to restore a world He has made?—to eliminate from this body the sin, and the decay, and the diseases that have entered; and to reconstruct and to constitute me a creature far nobler and better than when He gazed upon the new-made Adam, and behold, all was very good? But we are not left to a mere conjecture; there are express declarations in Scripture to this effect: for what does it say? "We look for the Saviour, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." That one text settles the matter. What was his glorious body? That body with which He rose from the mount. But our vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body. And, says Paul, "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised; and we shall be changed; for this mortal must put on immortality." And therefore we believe, that out of the dust the fallen shrine of human nature shall be

rebuilt, and consecrated afresh by God himself: on its cold altar a new vestal fire shall be kindled; and the second temple of humanity will be grander than the first; and there will be heard over it, in its beauty and in its perfection, a shout—an anthem peal of praise, richer, greater, more lasting than when the morning stars sang together for joy over a new-born world.

Throughout Scripture itself there is the intimation of man longing for, yearning, and desiring this very resurrection of the body. What does the apostle say in that magnificent chapter, Romans viii.? "We ourselves, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves;" that is, are in trouble. Why? "Looking for the adoption, to wit, the redemption"—that is, the resurrection—"of the body." And in the book of Revelation, the souls below the altar cry with a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And Rev. xx. is the response. Now then, this thought is forced upon my mind; the soul at this moment in the realms of glory, conscious, living, unspeakably happy, feels related to an absent body; in other words, amid all the felicity of heaven, there is remaining still a sense of incompleteness. For what does the apostle say? "I long to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord:" well, he is present with the Lord, but he is absent from the body. And the very sense of enjoyment that consists in presence with the Lord has the relieving sense—the deep recollection—that he is still absent from what is not a house separate from myself, but part and parcel of myself; for the definition of man is not spirit—is not animal, but soul and body joined together; and those that God united shall again be re-knit, and so shall man in his integrity thus be for ever with the Lord. If these things be so, I think the language that we sometimes hear men use, in reference to the body, is most unscriptural. We ought not to speak of the body with contempt; we ought not to regard it as done with when we die,

and denounce it as incapable of joy. The body is not an enemy, to be destroyed with death ; but a sorrowing partner in our fall, that needs to be comforted, and that will be restored. My blessed Lord sanctified my nature when He took a handful of the dust of which it was made, and knit it to himself, and filled it with all the splendour and glory of the *shechinah* upon earth. My blessed Lord speaks through my lips, looks through human eyes ; has in heaven with Him a human heart ; can sympathise with us in all our griefs.

The Saviour, therefore, having my nature in heaven, is to me an earnest, a proof, and a prophecy, that man in his resurrection body can be there also. But do we not see, what all must admit, that when death comes you must take this body, lay it in the dust, even as Abraham was obliged to hide his beloved Sarah out of his very sight ? What a humbling thought, that the noblest, the fairest, and most gifted, and most beautiful, must one day lie down in the house appointed for all living. Man surely has little ground for pride ; though, blessed thought ! even in the grave he has the sweet germ of everlasting and indestructible hope. But what seems decay in the grave is only a process preparatory to a glorious resurrection. The beautiful blossom emerging from the dark stem ; the golden-winged butterfly breaking its chrysalis shell, and coming out ; the spring rising from the winding-sheet of winter snow ; the summer about to be born of spring, are illustrative prophecies of the new, or the resurrection body, rising from the dust of the old ; "for that which thou sowest is not quickened until it die." And as long, therefore, as I look round me on spring, and see the seed decay that is cast into the earth, but issue in a lovelier plant ; and the petals wither, but disclose the ripening fruit ; so long I am satisfied that those sweet buds of promise that are scattered throughout this blessed book, that seem to wither into dust the instant we bring them near the grave, where corruption has begun its work ; those buds I am sure shall not decay ; they shall blossom, they shall bear immortal

fruit, and live in endless beauty ; for stronger, surer, than spring, and summer, and autumn, and winter, is one word that the Lord our God hath spoken.

But it has been asked, How are the dead raised ? Let me turn your attention to one illustrative clause, which strikes me as containing thoughts I have not found disclosed before. It is in 1 Corinthians xv. 35, where the apostle says, "But some one will say, How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come ? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." That one clause contains the secret of the whole. Let me ask you to watch and analyse that sentiment, and see if we have not in it some dim but not unillustrative illustration of the resurrection from the dead. First of all observe, "Except it die," teaches us dissolution. The seed is dissolved ; the body is dissolved. You take a seed of corn ; you deposit it in the earth ; it is disorganized, it is reduced into its constituent elements. So the body is laid in the grave. As long as life is in my body, it resists the laws of chemistry, and will not dissolve. The moment a man is born he begins to die ; and the thing that keeps him from dying is the higher law of life, which prevents the lower chemical laws of disorganization instantly taking effect ; life holds you back from disorganization. When life departs, and the body is left ; when the soul takes its flight, the body yields to the laws of chemistry, comes under new affinities, and falls into disorganization. But still, as the decaying seed that you have deposited in the earth is related to the full plant which that seed nurses in its bosom, and the death of that seed is necessary to the life of that plant, so the old body decays, but it has in its bosom the elements of the new one ; and the relation of the body laid in the tomb to the body that will be resplendent in glory is as vital and as indestructible as the relation between the seed that you put in the earth and the seed that grows on the ripe stalk when the season of autumn draws near. The seed in the earth is essential to the seed that ripens above it ; the body in the grave is essential to

and inseparable from the body that shall appear at the resurrection morn. And hence is the second law of evolution. "That which thou sowest is not quickened," that is evolution;—"except it die." When the body is laid in the grave there is not the destruction of the old body absolutely, and thereby an end to it, and afterwards the creation of a new; but there is the disappearing of the old by its appearing in the new; the new body gathering strength and vitality from the destruction of the old, till the old is exhausted, and all its constituent elements are taken into the new; thus that which fell is that which rises, corruption having become incorruption, and mortality immortality; yet all the while there is perfect identity, for there is no interruption or break in the development. It appears as the decaying seed in the earth evolves into the flowering stalk, and the seed in the ripe ear is the repetition of the seed that decays at its roots. The flower on the stalk would not be there, were the connection between it and the decaying seed interrupted for a moment. The resurrection body would not be, were the continuity of its connection with my decaying and mortal body interrupted for a moment. God could create another body, but He does not; He evolves the new resurrection body from the destruction and disorganization of the old; and the connection and continuity between them is as complete as the connection between the ripe ear on the stalk, and the decaying seed that died and perished in the earth at its roots. And it is really, I have sometimes thought, an interesting inquiry—a thought I leave others to consider—whether the resurrection of the body does not in some degree begin, in the case of a believer, even in this present world. The moment that a man's soul is regenerated, scripture teaches us that a present process begins in the central seat of the man, which will radiate outwards, and, uninterrupted by decay in the grave, it will continue till the trumpet sound, and the body rise immortal. For what does our Saviour say? When Jesus told Martha, "Thy brother shall rise again," Martha, thinking that He

alluded to the resurrection at the last day, said, "I know he shall rise again at the resurrection in the last day." Now Jesus evidently meant something more, for He adds, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me shall never die."

May it not be that the regenerated soul, even in this world, is laying the foundations of the resurrection body? May it not be possible that the regenerated soul is weaving, even in this life, the finer tissues, the more exquisite and delicate filaments of that glorious body which shall rise and be immortal for ever? If you ask, how do I prove this? I answer, look around you. Take a true Christian, who for years has cultivated purity of thought and holiness of life; who has restrained by grace his passions, who has curbed his appetites, who has striven more and more, by prayer and by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to be like his Lord. Then let us turn to the contrast—a profligate who has given scope to his appetites, his passions, his lusts, his evil and his abominable desires. Is there not in the outward aspects a contrast unmistakable? In the first there is a calm, a serenity, and in his sorest afflictions a peace that makes his face radiant almost with the forethrown glories of the resurrection morn. In the second character there is a gloom, a repulsiveness, an unattractive character, that seem darkening more and more. In the words of one who has written well upon this subject, "See we not in our neighbours and friends how long habit impresses their characters upon their faces. We admire and respect more and more the cheerful countenance of frankness, the calm brow of contemplation, the mild serene eye of holiness, the beaming, deep-seated smile of charity. We shrink with increasing horror from the leer of lust, the idiotcy of drunkenness, the scowl of malignity, and the contracted features of cunning and fraud. Thus these announce themselves to be at various stages towards that final state of the body, when no longer in a flux between decay and renewal, it shall be unchangeable and informed by an unchangeable mind to all eternity. If then it be true that the

thoughts of the mind, the affections of the heart, are writing themselves upon the outward countenance, may not that justify what seems a novelty, and which I have now ventured to state, that the soul of the regenerated man may now be acting on its material tenement; may now be laying the foundations of the incorruptible and the immortal body; and that even in this life Christ's great words, which always mean more than we generally attach to them, are strictly and literally true, "I am now the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me shall never see death, but shall live for ever"?

But let me add that in one respect the analogy fails. The ripe seed no sooner attains its perfection than it begins to decay; the beautiful flower is no sooner perfected than it begins to drop off. I have often felt, on looking at nature, which the apostle so strikingly describes as groaning and travailing in pain, and on a fine flower-garden, as if nature had made one gigantic effort to throw forth the evidences of perfection. But when autumn comes, all this glory falls back into what all was before—death and decay. Nature in her mightiest struggles gives birth to beauty that no language of mine can exaggerate; but that beauty is so feeble and imperfect that it decays and falls back into what it was again. But this will not be true of man, because man attains a higher life; he inherits what the flowers have not, what nature is a stranger to in its present economy,—a lasting life. And hence man will be the blossom of creation, ever fragrant, ever amaranthine; man will have the perfection of life; but his life will be so lasting, because our blessed Lord has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." That is not said of fruit, or flower, or blossom; but it is said of regenerated man. And therefore man's nature, when it reaches its culminating glory, will never fall back, like the flowers and fruits of the earth, into their original decay; he will last and live holy, beautiful, and happy for ever and for ever. I need not quote from Scripture evidences of this, in the resurrection of

our Lord, in the identity of Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration. This is the disclosure of revelation; it is not the discovery of man's reason. And what a glorious body will ours be! All its aches and its imperfections gone; the wrinkles about the eye, and the wrinkles on the face, that remind one of the brown sea-sand from which the tide of life is rapidly ebbing away, shall all be removed; all its defects shall be put away; the image of God shall be struck upon man in all its splendour; every pulse shall be praise, every action ecstasy, every feeling peace; and the second Adam, if man may be called so, will be happier, nobler than the first. And this great truth is the distinctive disclosure of revelation, on it the second death hath no power. Therein is the evidence of what we discover of man's endurance after he is risen, that over him the second death hath no power. There will be nothing in man for death to fasten on; there will be no fuel for the last fire, no crevice by which Satan may enter. Blessed, happy, and holy is he that hath part in this resurrection; for they will be priests and kings unto God. What was man made to be? The king of creation. And you do not need the Bible to tell you this; you have the lingering evidences of man's erst kingship everywhere. Let man look the ravenous lion firmly in the face, and it is said the lion, recognising the remains of the original sceptre and crown, will retreat and skulk away. Though there be much in man to indicate he is discrowned, yet he retains many of the traces of his aboriginal sovereignty; and all nature every day, under the action of science, is coming up to serve, and subserve, and be the slave of man; as if God would teach you in the world that there are prophecies everywhere that man had a sceptre that is now broken; that he shall have a sceptre again which shall never be snapped in twain. And when man is risen, he shall not only be the king of creation, but he shall be the priest of it. He shall be nature's eye, ever seeing God as the giver of all; nature's ear, ever listening to God as the sovereign of all; nature's minister, ever offering up

her first-fruits and her incense of praise and adoration to God.

How sad and sorrowful the creed of the heathen abroad, or the creed of the unbelieving heathen at home! I wonder how any man that does not believe in the Gospel can look upon a grave without horror; or can gaze upon the forsaken shrine from which the soul is gone without committing suicide; for of all things the most unnatural, the most inexplicable must be death, if the Bible be a repudiated and sealed book. But to a Christian, who follows his dead to the grave, and feels that it is not a funeral march, but a triumphant procession through that dark, deep valley up to the glorious sunlit mount that shines and sparkles beyond; he sees over the deepest grave in which he lays his dearest dust the star of Bethlehem shining; and his ear of faith can hear, rising even from the depths of that desert tomb, these beautiful words, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me;" and hearing those thrilling accents, he can pronounce a benediction, not for ever, but only for a little, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth; they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

My dear friends, see to it that you have that resurrection of the soul which is the sure prophecy of this glorious resurrection of the body. The new birth by the Holy Spirit is the germ of the future; it is the springtide of the everlasting summer; it is the seed sown that is of immortal growth. Oh, may our hearts be opened by that blessed Spirit who alone can change the heart; may we feel, what we should most deeply feel, that the burial-place of the human heart, in which are so many dead, must be emptied before the burial-places of the dead can give forth their charge, that they may enter into glory!

This is one of the things coming on the earth—all joy to some—all sadness to others.

LECTURE XXXIII.

DEGREES OF HAPPINESS.

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."—2 CORINTHIANS ix. 6.

THERE is clearly indicated in the Bible a distinction between what is called the first resurrection, or the company of those that believe; and the second, or subsequent resurrection, namely, those that die in their sins as they lived in them. I have already endeavoured to obviate some of the difficulties that occur to thinking minds on the subject of the resurrection. The resurrection of the body is not the extrication of something new from the great mass of humanity; but the resurrection of the individual body that fell, elevated, ennobled, purified; the mortal having put on immortality, the corruptible incorruption. The same body deposited in the grave shall rise from that grave, no longer pervaded by sin, defacing and disfiguring it; but holy, perfect, beautiful; our vile bodies fashioned like unto His glorious body.

There are traces scattered through the word of God, not few nor far between, that evince that not only in the state of the resurrection, but in the state of the soul separate from the body, there shall be mutual recognition; in other words, that each Christian in glory shall be not in a separate niche alone, without one countenance to reflect his thoughts, or one recollection of those from whom he was separated for a

season ; but that it is our Father's house, the everlasting home, the gathering place of all that fell asleep in Christ ; and that we shall know each other as distinctly and fully as we ourselves are then known.

Is there any evidence that there will be degrees of glory and of happiness in the age to come, and in a regenerated earth ? in other words, is there any connection between what is sown on earth and reaped in heaven,—between character generated here and glory inherited hereafter ?

Now it may seem at first that this inquiry is more curious than important ; but if God has spoken on the subject, it is not curiosity, but duty to investigate, understand, explain. If the Bible be silent on the subject, investigation or search is useless and undutiful ; but if God has touched upon the subject at all, it seems a duty to investigate whatever God has written ; for there is nothing in the Bible to satisfy a mere curiosity, but everything, from the least jot to the loftiest promise, to sanctify and make happy the human heart. In the next place, it would seem to me that while our title of admission into the realms of the blessed is equally and in all the same ; that is to say, while all Christians, whatever be their height of character, or whatever be the degree of their attainments on earth, are admitted into heaven by a title unto all and upon all, without a difference, by a righteousness done for them, not done in them, through Christ's intercession, in virtue of his sacrifice, and by his all-availing name, yet upon the basis of a common title of admission into glory, there may be raised a superstructure of ascending degrees of happiness ; and one saint may differ from another saint, as one star differeth from another star in the firmament. In other words, while there is no merit there may be degrees of grace on earth ; and if there be degrees of grace on earth, why not degrees of glory in heaven above, or in the Millennium beyond ? Besides, shall it be thought worthy of man to explore all the conditions of this present orb ; and shall it be thought curious or undutiful to explore the revealed characteristics of the

world which is to come? See the zeal and labours of men of science, how one will travel to the Andes, to the Alps, to the Apennines, and to Polar realms, in order to prosecute their researches about the structure of a bird, or about the habitat of a plant, or the genus of a flower. How many will dig into the bowels of the earth, in order to ascertain the archives of creation and of this orb from its earliest date. An astronomer, in the cold and frosty night, will watch through all its hours for the transit of a planet, or submersion of a satellite. And shall we, who are pilgrims and strangers, candidates for, and, we trust, heirs of a more exalted inheritance—shall we be careless about its nature; shall we be indifferent to what its characteristics are? Will it not be our irrepressible instinct, if we are on our way, to consult the map, to study the geography, and to ascertain all the bright peculiarities of that better and future country—the rest that remaineth for the people of God? Besides, there may be in this study of the degrees of glory, if it be true, or revealed, that very stimulus to effort that we need; for very often when one stimulus fails, another may take its place. While one man is more drawn by one attraction, another is more impelled by another. At all events, whatever God has written was written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.

Let us, in humble reliance upon God's Holy Spirit, try to ascertain what signs or hints there are of degrees of glory in the age to come. If grace be simply the bud of glory, and if glory be simply the culminating splendour of grace; if, in other words, the Christian's course, from his new birth below to his introduction into heaven, is a continuous and a progressive one, it is quite clear that earth and heaven or our present state and future rest, in the case of a Christian, differ in degree only, not in kind. Heaven enters into us before we can enter into heaven: heaven's holiness must come into our hearts now, that we may enter into heaven's happiness when the world is lost in the eternity to

come. If this be so, and if we can ascertain that one man has attained in this life more of heaven in his heart than another; if we can show that in this world, and under the *régime* of grace, there are degrees of progress, and approximation to the everlasting rest, we establish the principle, and I can see no reason for doubting the transference of the result to that better rest that is yet to come. Let me notice some instances. A beautiful description of how near one may approach to that better land; or rather, how much of heaven may be condensed into a human heart below, is given in his own figurative but eminently poetic, I would add, magnificent language, by the untutored and untaught preacher, John Bunyan, when he says, in the following words, "I saw in my dream that by this time the pilgrims were got over the enchanted ground, and entered into the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet."

Those bright anticipations of the future, which a thoughtless world often brands as fanaticism, are really the increasing splendour of the approaching glory; men of great piety and soberness of mind, as remote from fanaticism as they were from scepticism, have on their deathbeds seen a nook of the curtain lifted up, and gazed into the future rest, and only fallen back from excess of glory, unable to behold the spectacle any more. If this be reality, what does it show? That there are distinctions among Christians on earth; that one man seems to walk along the margin of the city that hath foundations; another seems to bask at a distance in its brilliant sunshine; another seems to have cloud and shadow over him; another seems so far remote from it that his faith trembles on the verge of extinction, and he is doomed continually to cry, "Lord, I believe; help mine unbelief." If these be facts, they are prophecies also; for if such degrees of happiness be realized in the church below, if such differences be realities in the experience of Christians here, it is not unreasonable nor illogical to conclude that such degrees, distinctions, and differences will exist hereafter. Must we not suppose also, that such men, with such distinc-

tions here, were capable of elevation to a glory or a table-land in the world to come of which others were not? Would it not seem as if these distinctions upon earth were evidences of varieties of meetness for varieties of glory in that city that hath foundations, in our Father's home, and amid its many mansions?

Bear in mind, then, this very important truth, that the future, or rather the upper life, is simply the continuity of the present; grace is the bud, glory is the full blossom. And just as our lower life has its childhood, its boyhood, its mature age, and its various stages; so the Christian life, and who does not know it if he be a Christian at all, has its growth, its new birth, its youth, its ripening into manhood; and death does not arrest its development, it only removes the obstructions to its progress. The soul carries with it into the other world the habits and the sympathies of this. The harvest for ever is the fruit of the seed-sowing now; the nature of the future is generated by the facts and experience of the present. Eternity has no water of ablation, it simply fixes for ever the direction in which each is to move. If I may represent it by a figure, Christ is the great centre of the infinite universe; all Christians are like radii drawn and approaching from a common circumference to that centre; the new birth is the point in the circumference from which they start; all eternity to come is the ceaseless approach to the infinitely remote centre; the happiness accumulating the nearer they approach what they never will be able to reach. Can we not conceive then, that some have approached nearer than others; and if so, that one enjoys a happiness that another does not? Can we not conceive that one enters into heaven a babe in Christ, crying, as he timidly touches the threshold of glory, "Lord, I believe; help mine unbelief;" while another enters into heaven, shall I say a giant or a full-grown man in grace?—loudly singing, "I know in whom I have believed; and that He has kept what I have committed to Him until this day." May these different characters differ for ever? If they do not, God must either violently advance

the one, or violently throw back the other. But if glory be the continuity of grace; if heaven be simply another table-land in the endless progression; then each will enter upon that place for which his previous discipline has fitted him; and as there were degrees in grace, so also there will be degrees in glory.

We see in this world that God puts distinctions upon men, Christian men, that are unmistakable and indisputable. Some Christians pass through the world unknown; they have left behind them no stain that blots their memory, but they have bequeathed no legacy of excellence that adorns, ennobles, and dignifies it. It may be because they lacked the opportunity. Other Christians pass through the world like clouds big with countless blessings; vindicating the truth, spreading the truth, winning souls to Christ; leaving behind them grateful hearts to commemorate their triumphs and their march. If then God makes such distinctions here, is it unnatural to suppose that there will be analogous distinctions in the future? If in this lower department of his kingdom He gave one double honour, and another less honour; is it not fair, and reasonable from analogy, to conclude that there will be differences and degrees in the world to come? If God makes distinctions in the nursery, will He not make, and will they not occasion distinctions in the heavenly palace? if He makes distinctions among his children He is training below, is it not but reasonable to infer that He will make distinctions in the enjoyment of their rest and happiness?

God shows by the very varied experience of Christians that there must be a difference. One Christian is persecuted, tormented; he is in perils by sea, in perils by land, in perils among false brethren; his life is a continuous martyrdom. Another Christian, not the less a true Christian, lives in the sunshine; his home scarcely has a cloud in its sky; few bitter losses, no severe crosses. Is it reasonable to suppose, while repudiating all merit in both, that there will be no difference in the

enjoyment of the one superior to the enjoyment of the other? Do not such texts as these seem to vindicate it? "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, *worketh* for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And again he says, "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." If Christ remembers at that day a cup of cold water given to a disciple in his name, and says it shall not be without its reward, will He forget the fountain that has been opened by another, and made to overflow in streams of beneficence upon the needy, the destitute, and the poor?

Suppose two Christians, equally pardoned and equally justified through the full and perfect righteousness of Christ, are admitted into heaven, and as saints in glory retaining what they had on earth, their memories, these two Christians look back upon the past. One looks back and sees nine-tenths of his life spent in ministering to vanity and sin, in the gratification of the lust of the eye, the pride of life, and the love of this present world. On a death-bed, perhaps, he was brought to know, to love, and trust in the only Saviour, and to receive what at the eleventh hour is as accessible as at the first, complete forgiveness, and a perfect and a joyous welcome. When that Christian looks along the vista of the past, can his life minister to him great comfort?—can he see that he has been a great blessing? If tears drop upon the pavement of the sky, a tear would surely drop from that eye that sees in the past a life all vanity; while the tear will be wiped away when he sees the infinite mercy and grace that so wonderfully forgave him. But another Christian, equally pardoned, equally justified, looks back, and what does he see? He sees the prisons of the captives that he visited with words of comfort; he sees the hovels of the poor, into which he carried a little of life's sunshine; he sees the naked whom he clothed, the mourner whom he comforted; and while he gives all the glory to grace, to sovereign grace, and takes no merit to himself, but feels all his right to be there exclusively what Christ did for him, not what he did for

Christ; is it possible that the latter shall not feel his heart's pulse bound with richer joy, while he sees in the distant retrospect, through grace, his life was not a blot, nor even a blank, but a large blessing to mankind? I cannot conceive that there shall not be a difference in these two. Will Paul, witnessing from heaven the bright record of his toils, and trials, and sufferings for Christ, have no richer joy, though no more merit and no more gratitude, than the thief upon the cross, when in his agony Christ said to him, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise"? Shall they that are in heaven, who have turned many to righteousness, and shine as the stars for ever, shine with no greater splendour than they who have been saved "yet so as by fire," that is, just in time to find Him who is the way to heaven? But are there not in the Bible actual instances of such distinctions? Are not Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob eminently distinguished when God says for ever, "I am the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob"? Were not Enoch and Elijah translated? Was not that a difference, a distinction? Were not Elijah and Moses on the mount of transfiguration? Were not the three great suffering apostles made the three favoured apostles on the mount Tabor, in that interval of heaven's glory let down to this present world? If these distinctions were just in themselves as on earth, distinctions and degrees multiplied a thousand-fold will be but just and right hereafter. We read of the state of the lost that there are degrees of suffering; and if there be stages of successive sorrow deepening still for ever, is it not fair to assume that there will be stages and degrees of endless joy? What does our Saviour say? "It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for Capernaum;" degrees of guilt followed by degrees of penalty. What does he tell us further? "The servant that knew his lord's will, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not his lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few

stripes." Does not this imply degrees of suffering? And what does the apostle convey when he says, "If he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment"—degrees of punishment—"shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing?"

How do you explain these differences or degrees of happiness? I answer, not by holding that the title to heaven is different in A from what it is in B. Our right to heaven is without distinction one and the same; but what we maintain is, that there is a difference in men's capacities, and that the capacity of one is fitted for a glory for which the capacity of the other is altogether unfit. It is not in heaven probably that the outer happiness will differ; but the inner power of taking it in and appropriating it will materially and for ever differ. For instance, more sunshine falls on the palace than falls upon the peasant's hovel. Why? The sky has the same brightness over and around both; but the one has a larger area, and is covered, therefore, with a greater amount of sunshine than the other. More rain-drops fall upon the large rose than fall into the cup of the sequestered violet. Why? The same shower descends, but the cup of the violet cannot hold so much as the rose. A scholar and a peasant walk forth in the month of May, or in the leafy month of June, amid the fields, the forest, or the garden. Both see the same sunshine, both gaze on the same green trees and the same bright flowers; but the difference in their joy and happiness is prodigious. The peasant sees, and is pleased; the scholar sees, and appreciates; he sees design, and plan, and arrangement in everything about him; and derives, by the superior capacity that he has, an amount of enjoyment that the peasant cannot have. So in heaven, the happiness may not be different in itself; but each man's capacity may so differ that one shall have an amount of joy that the other must be a stranger to. Dean Trench says, "They whose spiritual eye is

most enlightened will drink in most of His glory." We read that "God will reward every man according to his work." Now what does that mean? I must not, for fear of being suspected of believing that a man is justified by his own doings, shrink from what I find in the Bible. Never be afraid of the full statement of each truth; for, depend upon it, every truth is in perfect harmony with every other. Whatever God has revealed is true, though we may fail sometimes to see its accordance with other portions of the divine plan. "God will reward every man according to his work." "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them;" "in the Lord," their safety; "their works do follow them," the evidence of what they were, and what they have been made by grace. What mean such words as these: "God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love;" "Whosoever shall break one of the least of my commandments shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven"? When Peter told him, "Lord, we have left all, and followed thee," what did Jesus say? "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" a text on which Matthew Henry says, "There are here degrees of glory for those that have done most and suffered most." Again, in Matthew x. 41, we read, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward,"—the recognition of different rewards in the world to come. And again, we read in 1 Cor. iii. 13, "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it

is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire;" literally, "with the greatest difficulty;" or, as Peter says, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?" Now, this statement of Paul indicates that one shall receive an everlasting reward; that another shall be saved with the greatest difficulty. And upon this, Scott, another commentator, perhaps more accurate, though not more pious than Henry, says, "Some will suffer great loss in respect of the degree of future glory." In Daniel xii. 3, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." On that text Bishop Louth says, "These words import that they who have been the great lights of the world shall have a more glorious reward at the day of judgment."

Finally, we may draw the same conclusion from the analogy of this present world. All heaven will not be a monotony; all the splendours of the blessed will not be in all the compartments of that magnificent domain the same. Do we not find it so in this world? One flower differs from another flower in beauty, in fragrance, in preciousness; yet each lives in the same sunshine, and breathes the same air. One star differs from another star in magnificence and splendour; yet all the stars are moving in their appointed orbits for ever and ever. One woman differs from another in beauty; one man differs from another man in strength, in wisdom, in genius. In the bowels of the earth the granite and the gem are vastly different from each other; one crystal is superior to another crystal. In the head and in the heart, in the attainments of the one and the feelings of the other, what differences in different men! In the human countenance, what infinite and inexhaustible variety of expression! In social life itself we have the vast pyramid of society, the basis and the apex; the

masses, descending in successive layers to the foundation, constituting the base of society. If God, then, has made degrees of dignity, of beauty, of excellence, throughout his material, his natural, and his social world; if God has made degrees of happiness, fitness for heaven, and enjoyment in all his regenerated church, is it not the just and legitimate inference that there will be degrees of happiness infinitely differing from each other in that world which is the complement, the blossom, and the perfection of the world that now is?

These things being so, let me remind you of the practical lesson for us, first to take care that you are resting on the only Saviour. It is of no use for you to discuss the probability of degrees of glory, if you are a stranger to the right and title that enables you to cross the threshold. Your first anxiety, therefore, must be, Have I felt my sins an intolerable load? have I felt that God is offended with me as a conscious transgressor of his law? have I heard the joyous tidings that a Saviour descended to my grave, and died upon a cross for me, that my sins might be forgiven? have I accepted Him as all my title, all my righteousness, all my salvation; whose name I plead in prayer, whose name shall be my pass-word through the very universe itself; whose work for me is my only and exclusive ground of acceptance this day? Do I feel this? Do you feel this? Have you ever entertained it as a serious question? Is it a mere subject that you hear in sermons, but that you have never discussed in the silence and in the secrecy of your own individual heart? Till that question is settled, till that subject be entertained, pondered, and solved, all subsequent to it is but waste of words and loss of time.

If paralysis, now almost endemic; if apoplexy, the result of the excessive excitements of a world exhausted beyond its normal obligations; if fever, or sickness, overtake you; if the heart, weary with its march, stands still, there is not an end of you then. There is not even in death, let me remind you, a suspension of the continuity of conscious life. I believe that the

moment when your relatives look upon your pallid face, and say, "He is gone!" at that very moment you will be in possession of a consciousness clearer, brighter, more real, than ever you were possessed of on earth. And what is that consciousness? To look upon the face of the Son of God at the judgment-seat. And, oh! blasting thought, if you should discover that this is He that was slain for me, preached from the pulpit, pressed on my conscience, and I dismissed the subject from my mind, and went, to my farm, to my merchandise, or elsewhere! "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" What a strange thing that men think everything real but religion! They seem to think everything intensely important but living religion. They seem to have a notion, too, that if they venture to touch religion, their happiness will wither and die. It is all the reverse. If you at this moment do feel, "That blessed Saviour is mine;" if you do feel, "I can commit to Him my soul, with its inexhaustible prospects beyond the grave;" that come life, come death, it will be well with you, that sudden death will be sudden glory; then you must be happy. But are you to be satisfied with even this? No. I fear that many true Christians will discover that they make justification by faith alone in Christ's righteousness, so infinitely precious, a substitute for charity, for meekness, for liberality, for love, for duty. Pardon through Christ is not the end of religion, but the preface to religion. What are we doing in the world around us? what are we doing to help the cause of Christ, to promote the gospel, to add to the comfort of the destitute, the needy, and the poor? Is it nothing? Is it little? It ought not to be so. If I were a physician, I would try to be the very best in England; if I were a lawyer, I would try to be the ablest and the most eloquent pleader at the bar; if I swept a crossing, I would try to sweep it better than any other crossing in London. Whatever my profession, I would determine to excel in it. Let the ambition which shows itself in the things of time be sanctified and con-

secrated to a nobler being ; and when you leave this present world, let there be a train of beneficence behind you that will inspire many to pronounce your memories blessed. Let there be schools you have supported ; let there be the ignorant you have taught ; let there be the heathen you have enlightened ; and, by thus making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, when you enter into that everlasting rest, they will meet you and make you welcome there.

LECTURE XXXIV.

RECOGNITION IN THE AGE TO COME.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."—REV. xx. 6.

LET us try to gather from the word of God what light is cast upon a belief that most of us entertain, but that some have doubts and many have difficulties about, whether in the state of the soul as separate from the body previous to the resurrection, or in the soul united to the body subsequent to the resurrection, we shall be able to recognise relative relative, friend friend, companion companion, with whom we walked and took sweet counsel together. My conviction is that we shall; my belief is that the soul of the saint now in its disembodied state holds communion with and recognises the souls of others separate from the body now in glory. And it is not improbable that our relatives in perfect joy are nearer to us than our relatives across the sea; we may not see them, but they may thoroughly see, and know, and understand us. The state of the blessed in glory is less a place, and more, as Dr. Chalmers called it, a condition; less a locality, and more a state. And if that be so, then the beautiful Beatitude, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," may have a wider application to mourners on earth than we are disposed to think; they may be comforted with the hopes of reunion, and with the cheering

additional hope, without which reunion would be comfortless, of recognition and restoration.

Some families have, in every sense, their home in the future and the brighter land; their fathers, their mothers, their sisters, their brothers, have all emigrated—no, not emigrated; for we are in a strange colony, they have gone home; you that remain, like solitary trees in a once crowded forest, after a few years will also be transplanted and gathered home. There are few families that have not a stake in eternity above us and before us; few families that have not relatives beyond the grave. Blessed thought! it will be but a transient separation, the foretaste and the vestibule of an everlasting and unending communion. Some have said, If I could only be sure that those I have lost are, amidst joys unspeakable and full of glory; if only some voice could whisper in some stilly night from the depths or the heights, "it is well with them;" or if they could only speak one word, and say it is well with us; you think you could be comforted. But this cannot be: the waters of the Jordan that rush along the valley of the shadow of death make no audible music; there is at present a chasm between saints on earth and saints in glory impassable to either. We have what is equally good, a lamp that strikes its beams into the upper and the future, a sunshine that projects its shafts beyond the grave; and this book assures us, in words as certain and clear as a voice from heaven, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

But is there a prospect not merely of reunion, but also of recognition? First, let me show the instructive feeling of the heathen on this subject, as evidences of nature feeling a want that yearns to be satisfied. Let me secondly show what traces there are of this truth in the Old Testament; next in the New, in the teaching of our Lord and that of the Apostles; and lastly, obviate some of the objections that occur to inquiring minds. Almost every wise and enlightened philosopher in ancient times cherished the belief that he would meet

with those who had preceded him into the future. I admit they had no revelation; I do not notice what they felt as any authority; I simply notice what they said as evidence of nature's conscious want, yearning, and desire to meet and mingle with them that had preceded them to the other world. The first I will quote as an evidence of nature expressing its feeling is Socrates speaking in Plato, when he says very beautifully, "Who would not part with a great deal to have a meeting with Orpheus, Hesiod, and Homer, and again to converse with Ulysses!" Again, Homer, a great representative of the feelings of human nature, speaks of meeting in the future Ajax, and Patroclus, and Achilles. Cicero, the great Latin orator and philosopher, says, "I feel transported with ardent impatience to join the society of my two departed friends. I ardently wish also to visit those celebrated worthies of whose honourable conduct I have read, and to associate with the assembly of departed spirits and with my dear Cato." Virgil again, a Latin poet, represents Æneas as visiting the future, and recognising the dead that are there. I quote these not as proofs of the doctrine of recognition, or authorities whose verdict on the subject is of weight; but as evidences that there are in nature instincts that are prophecies; and that in Briton, in Hindoo, in Pagan, in Jew, you find a voice rising, not from sect, not from locality, but from the very silent and secret depths of the human heart; a voice of yearning and anxiety to meet and mingle with the departed dead, that is in its place a prophecy and an earnest that it will be actualized. The longing for it on the part of the heathen is incorporated with many absurdities, with extravagance and error; but as "sunshine broken in a rill, though turned astray, is sunshine still," so this truth, distorted as it may be, and mingled up with absurdity and extravagance as it is, is yet part and parcel of the original and primal feeling of human nature; and deep instincts in our nature are prophecies of their own fulfilment and gratification.

This mutual recognition, let me proceed to show, whether it be before or after the resurrection, I believe

to be a reality. The resurrection is only the intenser manifestation of the individual, not the creation of the possibility or fact of mutual recognition. The spirit disembodied and in eternal joy may recognise spirit, as angel recognises angel, with an accuracy and an exactness far greater than that with which we recognise each other through the media of these tents and veils of humanity in which it is our lot now to dwell. The fact is, we see less of each other in the flesh than we shall see of each other out of it. The body is a veil; and we know that such is the power of mind over exterior matter that it can shape and mould the countenance to give expression to what is not, as well as permit it to give expression to what really and truly is. And hence it seems perfectly reasonable to conclude that soul may recognise soul; that there is an identity there as real, as discoverable as in the features of the face, the gait or the walk, the tone of the voice, the look and expression of the countenance. It may be in that spirit land that a mother lifted to glory, wondering for a little if the son she left behind be with her or still in the flesh, may meet one spirit in that better land who shall give expression to his joy in the language of one of old, "I am Joseph;" and these words will waken lost reminiscences and features, and swell the joys of the redeemed even in the presence of God and of the Lamb. We must feel that in the upper glory and in the future rest memory is not extinguished. The resurrection does not quench a single attribute of humanity that was part and parcel of it originally; it glorifies all, it annihilates nothing. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we read that Abraham said, "Son, remember;" therefore, memory survives the grave. We read also that the rich man in misery recollected the number of his brethren on earth. If memory survive in the lost, surely it will survive in the blessed. The admission of human nature into heaven does not effect the mutilation of it, but the glorification of it with all the splendours of eternal and undying perfection. And if we carry memory with us into the realms

of glory, surely we shall instinctively and necessarily recollect persons, scenes, circumstances, relationships, and associations; and as sure as we recollect them we shall feel anxious to know that it is well with those who with us took part in them; and that anxiety to know, unmet and ungratified, would be a conscious want in heaven somewhat incompatible with the perfect felicity of the saved. Christianity as a religion, is the mother of union. Sin is the cause and the spring of disorganisation; true religion begins in this world associations, friendship, intercourse, communion, that never will and need not be dissolved. If Christianity has created new ties between me and others, and it was Christian to create them, it is only Christian to conserve and perpetuate them; if they be the fruits of this religion, like all its fruits they shall have an amaranthine life, an imperishable glory. And again, natural ties, the ties of parent, of child, of brother or sister, are intrinsically pure and holy; they were originated before sin entered. And if they be in themselves intrinsically holy, we must expect that the religion which sanctifies all that is natural will perpetuate for ever what it has sanctified. Can we suppose that Lazarus will not know Martha and her sister Mary? Will the friendship of David and Jonathan be quenched for ever? Will the beautiful affection of Ruth and Naomi wither the instant that it is admitted into that land where all bright things never fade, and all blessed things die not? Besides, there are certain facts here that seem to demand further recognition. For instance, some unseen benefactor has interposed in the hour of your trial, and relieved, comforted, or delivered you. Some word spoken in a distant part of the world by one you never saw has become to you a ministry of everlasting joy. Some great truths in the printed page, set in a new light, have struck your heart with irresistible force; you never saw the person that wrote them, you never heard a word from his lips; but if you feel that what you read, written by some one across the Atlantic, has been to your soul a savour of life, will it not be natural in

heaven, will it not be natural in the future state, to seek out the unknown individual, to ask what he is and who he is? If they that have turned many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever, will it not be natural that you should see that bright star that has guided you across a stormy and a tempestuous sea, now that there is no cloud to intercept its splendour, no darkness to dim, and no space to separate? The desire seems to be so natural that surely the sense of it here is the prophecy of its gratification hereafter. One cause why we do not see as we are seen, is that sin has enfeebled the intellect, deadened the conscience, depraved the heart; but we are absolutely assured that in the future world we shall see in a brighter light all things more clearly; for in this world we see through a glass darkly. Remember, that in the times when the apostle wrote, the window through which they saw, or the mirror which reflected the human countenance, was then very imperfect, and from its nature extremely opaque. The apostle says, "We see now through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now we know in part; but then we shall know even as we are known."

But the decisive proof is God's holy word. I will refer first to the feelings of the Jews, as they are indicated in the Old Testament. We all remember reading the anxiety of Abraham to find a burying-place at Machpelah for the dust of the beloved Sarah; and his eloquent and yet business-like transaction with the sons of Heth upon this subject. Also, the dying request of the patriarch Jacob when the time drew near that he must die; and he called his sons and said, "I am to be gathered unto my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying-place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was

from the children of Heth." Now what was the reason of this desire of the patriarchs to find one common resting-place? It was not a morbid fancy, nor a mere imperfect human passion; it was an instinct that taught them that the dead dust beneath the oaks of Mamre should one day be quickened with the pulse of everlasting life; that the dead dust, that can still be traced to the very spot where it was deposited by the patriarchs, shall hear the voice of the resurrection trumpet, and shall come forth and be the heir of everlasting life. But we go a step further: it is said, "Abraham was gathered to his people." Does that mean simply that he was buried with them? That is not true; for Terah his father died in Haran, and Abraham's body was not buried along with his. But Abraham is said to have been gathered to his own people previous to his burial; and therefore it must mean his soul joined the company of them that had preceded him to glory. You recollect what Jacob said, "I will go down into the grave;" that is our translation, it is properly, "The place of disembodied spirits;" "I will go to the company of disembodied spirits, to my son, mourning." And when his children tried to comfort him, it is said he refused to be comforted; evidently his feeling was to mourn till he should meet his son; then the patriarch felt he should be comforted. The very fact that he expected comfort when he should meet his son in the place of departed spirits is proof that he expected then and there to recognise him. Moses, again, was buried on Mount Nebo: it is said he too was gathered to his people. But his sepulchre was an unknown sepulchre; it must therefore have been his spirit gathered to the spirits of just men made perfect. This desire to rest their dead dust where the dust of their fathers was; the expectation to be gathered to them who had preceded them to glory, all assumes their belief of reunion, their expectation of recognition; for it was not to a strange people and a strange land, but to the company and communion of them that preceded them. The memorable expression, too, of David is very suggestive; when his child

was taken from him, his first feeling was absolute submission to God; but his second was a special spring of consolation, "I shall go to him, though he shall not return to me." Does not that very expression of hope imply his belief, that his joy would revive because he would recognise his son that God had taken from him in just and righteous chastisement to him? In the teaching of our blessed Lord this reunion and recognition is assumed rather than asserted. It may be said of human nature what is said of the law, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it." When Christ came to redeem us, He came not to alter the essentials of human nature, but to sanctify, to perfect, and to glorify all. When Jesus comforted Martha, what did He say? Not "He is happy;" that would have been so far comfort; but He said, "Thy brother shall rise again;" not simply "Lazarus shall rise again;" but "thy brother." As if to show that there would be the resurrection of the visible relationship as well as the resurrection of the dead man, He says, "Thy brother shall rise again." Speaking of the future, Jesus says, "In my Father's house are many mansions." Then heaven is represented as a home; all the saved are under one sheltering roof, and derive their joy from one common domestic hearthstone. Will that great, perfect, and holy family be the only family where all the inmates are strangers each to the other, and strangers to their common Father? If Jesus recognised those that were gathered round Him below, and they recognised each other, is it possible that they should be gathered round Him in glory, and one fail to recognise the other? When He says again, "Many shall come from the east, and from the west, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob;" will they be unconscious in whose presence they are? Will they not know that this is Isaac, and that Jacob, and that Abraham? Is not the very fulfilment of the promise necessarily recognition, so that they that heard and believed the promise may know that it is fulfilled? He also says, "Ye also shall sit down on twelve

thrones," that is, the apostles; "judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Will they not know that these are the twelve tribes; will the twelve tribes not know that these are the apostles? And at the judgment-day, what does Jesus say? "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren," pointing to groups that were around him, "ye have done it unto me." He says, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations;" that is, that those you have benefited by your wealth, and riches, and influence, may at the gates of glory welcome you into everlasting mansions through Christ the Lord; and to testify that inasmuch as you did it unto them, therefore, you did it unto Christ. Moses and Elijah appeared together on the mount of transfiguration; their identity preserved, their persons recognised. The lost rich man seeth Abraham afar off; Lazarus in his bosom recognised Abraham, and Abraham recognised him. Again, if we come to the epistles of the New Testament, we find equally clear proof of a recognition. For instance, we read in the epistle to the Hebrews, "Ye," speaking of the saved in glory—"are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all." Does not that imply recognition, communion, reunion? Paul, speaking to his converts in Colosse, says, "Warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Does not that seem as if the apostle expected to recognise those that he expected to present as the seals of his ministry, as the fruits of his labour? Archdeacon Paley, a man of no imagination, of no great, or deep, or tender feeling, writing upon this very text, says, "This affords a manifest and necessary inference, that the saints in the future life shall meet and be known again the one to the other." Again, the apostle tells the Corinthians, "We are your rejoicing, as ye also

are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus." Does not that seem to indicate that they shall know him, that he shall personally know them; and when they meet at the judgment seat of Christ they shall rejoice in the company of each other? Still further, the apostle says, "For what is our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing? Are not ye in the presence of the Lord Jesus at his coming? For ye are our glory and our joy." Does not this imply that the apostle expected as his reward to meet them to whom his ministry had been blessed, and to derive accession to his joy from the sight of the multitudes of them who, through what he taught them, had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb? I have quoted Paley on one text, let me quote another clear and logical writer, a perfect parallel to Paley, who had no tender feeling or deep passion, Dr. Macnight; in his Critical Edition of the Epistles of the New Testament, he says upon this text, "The manner in which the apostle speaks of the Thessalonians shows that he expected to know his converts at the day of judgment. If so, we may hope to know our relations and our friends in everlasting joy." Once more, in 1 Thess. iv. 13, we have no less conclusive evidence of the same thing. The apostle says, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Now what was the cause of the sorrow of these mourning Christians? It was the separation from their society of those they loved and held communion with on earth. What would be comfort to them? Not the general fact of the certainty of the resurrection from the dead, for they knew this; but the special fact that those that had been taken from them they should meet and mingle with, and recognise again. The words prove this inference irresistible. He says, "Them which sleep in Jesus will he bring with him; and so shall we be for ever with the Lord." And again he says,

"We which remain shall be caught up together with them." The idea that runs through that most beautiful passage is restoration and recognition of those that have been taken away; reunion and restored communion with them from whom they had been separated. The spring of consolation he opens to the mourning Thessalonians because of the loss of their near and dear ones is not the resurrection, but the recognition, reunion, and restoration of the ties and bonds that death had snapped, when Christ should come again, and they all should join Him, and so be for ever with the Lord.

There are objections to this great truth, and objections that have a great deal of plausibility in them. First of all, it is alleged by some that death makes so great, so awful a change, that we cannot reason from any experience that we have below to facts and phenomena which may exist in heaven or hereafter. I answer, we mistake what death does; death does not annihilate a single faculty of the mind, a single pure affection of the heart; it operates no change in the individual Christian whatever, except that of transference from grace to glory, from earth to everlasting heaven. At death we leave behind us simply our sin; and at the resurrection-day we shall be raised with all the traits of an individual and characteristic identity; sin, imperfection, tears, and headaches and heartaches, only being left behind for the last fire to consume. In the second place, it has been objected that at the resurrection the change will be so great in our present body, that it will be impossible to reason from what we now see or feel in the body, to anything that can possibly be realized after that great and radical change. I answer, when the body is raised from the dead, not one fugitive expression on the face, not one glance in the eye, not one tone in the voice, not one feature that constitutes the identity and the personality of the man, need or shall be altered or destroyed in the grave. Sin only will be eliminated—imperfection and sorrow, its progeny, will be driven away; but this very corruptible shall put on

incorruption. Nay, we have evidence what it shall be ; it is said in the Corinthians, " He shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Have we any picture of Christ's glorious body ? We have. " The fashion of his countenance was altered ; his raiment was white and glistening ; and his face did shine as the sun." Now, here is the photograph of Christ's glorified body. Well, our bodies shall be like his glorified body. But did the apostles fail to recognise Him as they thus beheld Him ? On the contrary, all the marks of his identity were there. They recognised the same man of sorrows, that hung upon the cross, that wept and sympathised with us, and struggled in his agony in the garden of Gethsemane. And when He rose from the dead himself, He said, " Touch me, and handle me ; and see that a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." What is meant by all this, if not to convince us, not only of our Lord's identity, but of the recognisable and distinguishable identity, between the resurrection body and the body that now is ? But it has been objected that individual, and personal, and social, and relative affections and attachments are incompatible with the supreme affection and attachment that we owe to the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. It is thought by some that all personal and relative affections shall be merged and lost in the one absorbing and consuming love to the Lamb that sits upon the throne. But I do not see that this must follow. For instance, Jesus had the disciple whom He loved—loved not merely as He loves you and me, the sinners He has washed in his blood ; but loved as his friend, preferred as the companion of his travels, and has inspired the sacred penman to record not the least beautiful and touching proof of his true human heart, " The disciple whom Jesus loved." And because in the realms of the blessed we may have affections and attachments to each other, it does not follow that these will weaken or dilute our attachment to our common Lord. The moon moves round the earth ; yet no less than the other planets round the sun ; so saints

in glory may have their particular orbits, their individual attractions; yet no less do they move with all saints around the central sun, the Sun of Righteousness. Our human affections on earth are not incompatible with our love to our common Lord; and when all shall be purified, they will still less be incompatible. But it has been objected that our Lord has said, "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Luke explains what this means when he says, "As the angels, neither can they die any more." But because marriage ties are not created in the future, it does not follow that the friendships, and affections, and bonds of that very relationship shall not be remembered and realized. It does not follow because there are no new ties formed there that we shall fail to recognise each other there. Can we suppose each Christian in heaven to be like a monk in a cell, or a statue in a niche; cold, unfeeling, unconsciously connected with the thousands, the teeming thousands, that are around him? If so, heaven would not be our Father's home; it would be the cell of the anchorite, not the home of the Christian son.

It has been objected by others—and this is, perhaps, the strongest objection of all, or, at least, the one the most difficult to deal with—that if memory survive the grave, if there be no essential revolution in all its recollections, that there will be and must be pain, sorrow, and bitterness in the future rest or in heaven; for shall we not miss there some that we would give all the world to meet there? And if we miss in the groups that are clad in white robes, and that are around the throne, beloved ones that we revered and loved with nature's warmest sympathies on earth, will not that be a gap? will not that be agony, and sorrow, and distress? And how is that compatible with the statement that in the age to come there will be neither sorrow, nor crying, nor tears, nor any more pain? I admit this is the most difficult to answer; but I submit what I think approximates to an answer, if it is not a perfect and complete one. May it not be that only the ties of

nature that have also been sanctified by grace shall survive even in recollection, in sympathy, and in thought? For instance, a Christian woman is married to an unregenerate and an unchristian husband. The tie of nature ceased when the husband died, or when the wife was gathered into everlasting glory. May it not be that this tie, not having been consecrated and baptized by grace, not having been glorified by Christian light and Christian love, may, having ceased to be a reality—for death separates wife from husband, and dissolves the marriage tie—cease also to be a recollection? The saved in heaven are washed from their sins, but they cannot forget the sins of which they were guilty upon earth. It will be impossible to forget, because we have memories, that we once did sin upon earth. Yet the recollection of those sins will occasion us no sorrow. In the same manner the glorified wife may have no pain at the recollection of the lost husband, or, at least, no pain from missing him there, because that tie, once so near and dear, dropped when nature died, and is remembered no more. Besides, may it not cast a little light upon this very difficult thing if we consider that the angels that are in glory must recollect that a vast battalion of their numbers is now writhing in endless agony? Angels fell; Satan is the prince of the fallen angels; yet the happiness of angels in heaven is not diluted by the recollection that many of those that were once there are not there now. There is also a text, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" that is, all ties, bonds, relationships, that are mere flesh and blood, and that never were consecrated, sanctified, or baptized by the Spirit of God, do not enter into the kingdom of heaven; are broken off and cease there for ever and for ever. And we have almost a dim presentiment of this from our blessed Lord's words: "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and

who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother;" as if the earthly relationship was absorbed and annihilated in the divine and the higher relationship of God. But if it should be maintained by any that there is no recognition above, or before us, that would not diminish these supposed sorrows. If there shall be pain, or the possibility of pain, from the reminiscence that one is missing that we want to meet, if there be no recognition at all, we shall equally fail to be sure that those we wish to meet have been admitted here. You do not get rid of the difficulty by denying recognition in the world to come. But besides, of this we are absolutely sure, that all painful recollections are impossible there. We know from our own experience what may be a presentiment and prefiguration of it, that feelings of grief at the loss of near and dear ones, at first most poignant, almost intolerable, gradually subside into resignation. And so it may be, that missing in the groups of the saved some that we could wish to be there, our regrets may so subside into resignation to God's most excellent will, that we shall be able to say, with an emphasis with which we never said it before, "Thy will be done here, even as it is done elsewhere in heaven." But may it not be that as there is a hope against hope respecting dead relatives which we feel here, it may be in mercy permitted to us, in the realms of glory, that we shall never be sure that some we expected to meet are not there? Our Father's house has all infinitude for its dimensions, all eternity for its duration; and though we may not meet some that we may wish to meet, that will not prove that they are not in some other chamber of the universal home, in some other compartment of our Father's house. But of this we are absolutely sure, that we shall have no feelings, desires, or sympathies that are not in perfect harmony with the will and the mind of God. For instance, Aaron held his peace when his two sons were struck

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dead ; and the brothers of these two were forbidden to weep for them, and we read that they held peace. So our sympathies and affections shall be entirely moulded according to God's holy will, that we shall have no wish that is not a reflection from the throne ; no desire that is not an echo of his word ; no want that is not perfectly, completely overflowed by Deity. We shall miss some great professors that all the world would have canonised ; and we shall meet many a quiet, reserved, almost speechless one, who felt deep thoughts, uttered few words, was a saint concealed, it may be, by his imperfections, concealed, it may be, by his timidity, but a saint indeed, and an heir of everlasting glory. And it does seem that if you were to take away that blessed thought of meeting Christians whom we have known and loved below, relatives above whom we have spent our pilgrimage with upon earth, it would take a gem from the crown of glory, a bright beam from everlasting day. Beautifully, therefore, does the poet say,—

“ Oh, when the mother meets on high,
The child she lost in infancy,
Hath she not then for pains and fears,
The day of woe, the watchful night,
For all her sorrows, all her tears,
An over-payment of delight.”

And in that remarkable book by Tupper, “*Proverbial Philosophy*,” full of precious thought, he says, “ I look to recognise, through the beautiful mask of their perfection, the dear familiar faces.”

But if you should ever think of missing one in glory, what is the available remedy ? Are you, husband, associated with a wife who gives no evidence of being a child of God ? Speak to her the sacred words ; tell her of the availing name. Oh, let not that foolish, stupid, worthless shame that you would not show as a soldier, a sailor, a lawyer, or a physician, prevent you one moment from saying, “ This is the way ; walk ye in it. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” And if I address a wife whose husband gives

no evidence of grace, speak to him; gentle words, spoken in a gentle spirit, may fall like the dew upon the soil, without noise, and without seeming present effect; but they saturate the soil, and the beauteous summer gives token of its effects. "A word in season, behold how good it is!" I ask, is there anything more worthy of being spoken of than Christ, the soul, eternity? In a few fleet years the youngest and the healthiest and the strongest must lie down and die; in a few fleet months the aged must leave this pilgrimage of toil, this battle-field of conflict. Surely, surely, if there be one thought that ought to dominate, that ought to be supreme and overwhelming till it is settled, it is this, Will it be well with me at the judgment-seat of Christ? Shall I be among those to whom He will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father"? How is it that men are all anxiety about the things of the world, all apathy about the things of eternity? How is it, I ask in the name of common sense, not to speak of the name of Him whose ambassador I am, how is it that the trifles of a day stir every passion and sympathy of the human heart; and that the very world for which we are here, the very end for which we are born, the safety of the soul, acceptance through the blood of sprinkling, are treated as if time were eternity, and eternity were time?

If you have any one connected with you, live Christianity, speak Christianity, teach Christianity, and, above all, pray. I do not believe that a child that has been the object of a mother's prayers will ever perish. I do not believe that a husband who is the ceaseless burden of a wife's prayers at the throne of grace will die eternally. I have perfect faith in God as the hearer of prayer. Pray, pray, pray. And then when your prayers are answered, they will be lost in everlasting praise; and you shall meet above them with whom you held sweet communion below; and nature's ties, glorified in the light and splendour of the better land, will be the media of only more reciprocal delight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and glory.

LECTURE XXXV.

THE THRONED PRIEST AND KING.

“ And he shall sit and rule upon his throne ; and he shall be a priest upon his throne : and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”—ZECHARIAH vi. 13.

THE prophet, I need not say, refers to the Lord Jesus Christ : this is the prophecy of what He shall be. There can be no difficulty in coming to this decision. I do not therefore spend time in attempting to prove it. It has been fulfilled in no other, it has been actualized in Christ, and this alone as proof that it relates to Him. This spectacle of Christ upon his throne was seen by Isaiah when he saw “ the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above stood the seraphim : each one had six wings ; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts ; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips ; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” Who was this King, or Lord of hosts, that Isaiah saw ? We are informed by the evangelist John that these things spake Esaias when he saw Christ’s glory, and spake of Him ; and those things that he thus refers to are the things quoted, specifically quoted, in the sixth chapter of the book of the prophet

Isaiah. I cannot conceive how it is possible to conclude that Christ is merely a creature, as long as I find an evangelist, inspired by the Spirit of God, quoting a prophet's delineation of Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, and asserting that vision and delineation to be the Lord Jesus Christ. I only wonder how the Unitarian ever gets over the difficulties of his creed: they seem to me insuperable; and either he must be gifted with super-human penetration to arrive at so extraordinary a conclusion, or he must have badly read a book which the more it is read reveals more clearly the impress of its author, and the deity of our blessed and adorable Lord. He was seen upon a throne by Isaiah; and He is here predicted to sit upon his throne. The expression, "sitting upon a throne," is figurative, but being figurative, it must have substance as its meaning. Spoken of in Scripture are several thrones. There is first the throne of majesty, or that universal sovereignty and precedence which Christ exercises over all the universe; all the things that are fair upon earth, all the things that are beautiful in the sky are under his control and subject to his government. Heaven is his throne, we are told, and earth is his footstool; he made the sea and the dry land. He superintends and governs from that throne the sea with its waves, earth with its flowerets, the sky with its clouds, and its stars, nations and their people, thrones and their occupants, cherubim, and seraphim, and children, all are under the presidency, the government, and inspection of Him beyond whose cognizance the greatest things are not, and within whose superintendence the minutest things ceaselessly lie.

There is also a throne called "the throne of grace." "He is exalted a prince," that is royalty, "and a saviour to give repentance and remission of sins." And the apostle says in the epistle to the Hebrews, "Having a high-priest, let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in the time of need."

Lastly, there will be the throne of judgment. Christ will be the occupant of that. We read expressly, "The

Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all the nations." Again, "We must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ." Again, "He will judge the world in righteousness." And again, Christ says from the throne, "Come, ye blessed of my Father." There is another incidental proof that Jesus is God. If God be not upon the judgment-seat, where can He be, or should He be? I could almost conceive God to be absent at the creation of the world; I could almost conceive the absence of a God in the government of the world; but I cannot conceive that Deity shall be absent from that throne, at which and from which the doom and the interests of all flesh shall be adjusted, all hearts laid bare, and to every man meted out the exact and everlasting retribution that justly belongs to him. Grant me that my Redeemer is to sit upon the judgment throne, and I need no text to prove that He is God; none but God can be there; and if God be not there, He seems to me absent from that place where of all places in the universe his presence is most imperatively required.

But all these thrones, we are told, will be ultimately merged in one, called the throne of glory. "When he shall sit upon the throne of glory, a Prince and a King for ever;" every knee shall bow to Him, every tongue shall confess that He is Lord. "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Now a picture of this throne we have very beautifully and graphically set before us in the book of Revelation, where John says in the fifth chapter, "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns,"—that is, omnipotence—"seven ages"—that is omniscience—"which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth unto all the earth." Then he says, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and

priests; and we shall reign on the earth." And again at the eleventh verse: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." It will not be a little number that will be saved; we cannot agree with the exclusive bigot that a handful will be saved; we cannot agree with the latitudinarian universalist that all mankind will be saved; but I believe that, taking all the generations of the human race together, the overwhelming majority will be the occupants of heaven, and a minority the inmates of a prison into which they rushed themselves, in spite of remonstrating appeals, and where they are, not because God sent them there, but because they themselves made themselves fit for being there, and for nowhere else in the universe of God. "A great multitude," he says in another part. And what did they say? "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Can that be a human being, can that be an angel, to whom the universe thus lifts anthems of everlasting praise, and who receives them on the throne as his just and inalienable due?

Thus we have seen every throne which Christ occupies and will occupy; let us now look at the functions which He fulfils as the occupant of these thrones. First it is said, "He shall be a priest upon his throne." Part of the priestly office He fulfilled without, when He suffered without the gate, and gave himself for us. Another part of the priestly office He carries on in the holy of holies, where He ever liveth to intercede for us. But here He is set before us in combined or conjunct character, not only as a priest, pleading by the altar, but also as a king throned or seated on his throne. This is Christ's intransferable glory—that He is a priest and a king at the same time. The house of

Aaron had a priesthood, but they had not a sceptre and a crown. The house of David had the sceptre and the crown, but not the altar, the mitre, the breastplate, the Urim and the Thummim, and office of the priesthood. But Jesus combines all the sacredness of Aaron and all the royalty of David—the priestly office and the kingly office welded into one. The occupant of that great and lasting throne in this vision shall have the altar and the throne in one—the cross He suffered on and the crown He wears inseparable in his approaching reign; and this I shall show is the spring and source of our greatest blessings. Look at Christ upon the throne, and the element you feel must be despair; look at Christ upon the altar, and you may want that awe, and reverence, and godly fear, wherewith you should approach Him. But look at the majesty of the king through the mercy of the priest, and you will not despair; look at the mercy of the priest through the majesty of the king, and you will not presume. Thus looking and resting upon Christ a priest upon his throne, you will have peace with God through Christ Jesus. From God's altar He sends forth rich mercy; from God's throne He sends forth direction and authority. Thus love and law, justice and mercy, righteousness and truth, are brought together, and descend from heaven to earth a river that makes glad the city of our God, the tabernacle of the place of the most high.

He shall *sit* upon his throne as a priest. Now this is a mark of special dignity, power, and authority. We find in the ancient economy that Aaron and the priests of that dispensation, when they officiated at their altars, invariably stood. But the distinction that is here implied, that Christ sits upon his throne, teaches us that we have no need of propitiatory sacrifice. It is finished. If Christ were still standing by his altar or by the throne, it would imply that propitiatory sacrifice was still going on; but the fact that He has sat down indicates that all the painful sacrifice without is finished, and that He now wears the trophies and enjoys the spoils

of his glorious and blessed victory. Thus in the ancient economy we are told by the apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews, the tenth chapter, and the eleventh verse: "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sin. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." What a beautiful contrast! *Every* "priest" in the ancient economy; many priests contrasting with "this man"—one priest. Then "every priest *standeth*." The attitude of servants carrying on a process incomplete; but this man *sat down*. And "every priest standeth daily offering"—that is, many sacrifices; but "this man after he had offered one sacrifice for ever"—*for ever*; that is, completely, perfectly. And these offered sacrifices which can never take away sin; but this man offered one sacrifice for sin for ever. And I may notice what I see is corrected in a later edition of Bagster's Bible—the wrong placing of a comma in that very verse which I am quoting; and it is one of those little mistakes that are of very great importance. In the twelfth verse we read; "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins." In most Bibles the comma is put after the word "sins;" and then it is added, "for ever sat down on the right hand of God." Now He is not set down for ever on the right hand of God; He is to rise and come again. Every one that knows the Greek language would see at once that the comma should be placed after "for ever." And therefore this verse should be thus read: "After he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever,"—completely, in opposition to the many sacrifices of Levi—"sat down on the right hand of God." Unless read in this way, the full force of the contrast is not brought out. We have thus our High Priest, not standing like a servant with a process incomplete, but having sat down—the sacrifice finished, the oblation offered, and no more needing to be made as an atonement for sins.

These two offices of Christ as a Priest and a King

are never separated in his person, and yet they are perfectly distinct. The inquiry why God should be pleased to reveal himself in offices, is to be answered just in the same way as the question why should He please to reveal himself in attributes. We speak of the attributes of God—omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence. So God is revealed partly in nature, partly in providence. And it is only in analogy with these and similar attributes that we speak of Christ as revealed by offices; it is the accommodation of the infinite to finite minds. Christ is revealed to us as a king and a priest. It is not the office of a king to intercede; it is not the office of a priest to reign. Therefore it is as a priest He is appointed to give remission of sins; and as a king that He is appointed to give repentance. Thus in that text often quoted you will see a revelation of Christ as a priest upon his throne. "He is exalted a prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins." A prince to give repentance, which is something created within us; a priest to give remission of sins, which is something declared without us. The efficacy of his blood secures for us the pardon of our sins; the efficacy of his royal sceptre creates within us repentance or sanctification of heart. Now let us see the Lord Jesus Christ as the great priest and king upon his throne, and view Him in both features as He is set before us in the gospel.

View Him then first of all as a priest; for we cannot comprehend all the fulness and glory of his character at once; giving remission of sins, and ever living to intercede for us. The priestly office of Christ is constantly referred to in every part of the New Testament as the great spring of all the consolations of the people of God. Do you need the comfort of pardon—do you need the comfort of assurance—do you need hope, and peace, and joy? The fountain that is open is the fountain in the house of David—that fountain of atoning blood, the foot-print upon earth of a high-priest that has passed over it, is the great source and cause of all our joy, and our peace, and our comfort.

He is spoken of in the next place as a king. You will see in his royal character nothing to awe or to alarm. Because He is a king, He has command; but because He is a priest as well as a king, his commands are not grievous. Because He is a king, He has a yoke; but because He is a priest as well as a king, his yoke is easy and his burden is light. His very commands are royal ones, He commands to us to be happy. This is his command; that you believe on his name. His very law is love; his sceptre is so mingled with his cross that when you are thinking of the majesty of the one, suddenly there comforts you an apocalypse of the mercy, and love, and sympathy of the other. Do not separate the two great functions of his character, while you should view them as perfectly distinct. Some try to separate them; there are excellent people, moral and upright people, who look exclusively to Christ as a king. Those that deny the atonement—that do not see their own ruin by nature—that do not see their need of a remedial system, look to Christ only as a king; they hear his law, and they say, “How beautiful!” they listen to his precepts, and they say, “How perfect!” and they set themselves to obey them, and they fail miserably, not to express their allegiance to Him, but to win their way to heaven and to everlasting happiness. Now they that look to Christ alone as a king, need to be told that by deeds of law, that is, by obedience to Christ’s precepts, no human being can be saved. You never can get to heaven as the reward of being holy; the steps by which we climb to glory are not those carved on Sinai by the Ten Commandments; you never can strike a way, or purchase a way, or by dint of force prepare a way by which, and in which, and through which you can get to heaven. Therefore, do not look to Christ alone as a king; in other words, do not regard Christianity as a mere edition of a perfect law, as a code of exquisite precepts, as it is; as a compendium of holy law, which it is. I do not blame you for so regarding it; but I do blame you for so regarding it exclusively. It is right you should see Christ the king;

it is wrong you should think of Him only as the king. And just to take the obverse, you are not only not to look at Christ's kingly office alone, but you are also not to look at Christ's priestly office alone. There are some people who so look at the kingly office, that they try to get to heaven by obeying his law; there are other people who so look at Christ's priestly office, that they hope to get to heaven in spite of disobeying Christ's law. Now, our answer to the latter is, you are not saved by good deeds, but you cannot be saved without them. The distinction is broad;—you are not saved by good deeds as if they were the grounds, and merits, and titles of your salvation; and you are not saved without good deeds as the fruits and evidence of your personal acceptance of the Gospel. There are those who may be called Antinomians, who look to Christ's priestly office alone, their idea of salvation is immunity from the consequences of sin; whereas, if I understand the Bible, salvation is immunity not only from the penalty, but from the polluting presence of sin. Human nature wishes to be saved from the consequences of sin—that is, hell; sanctified human nature desires to be freed from the presence, the touch, and contact of sin. A true Christian shrinks from sin as much as from its effects; and he cannot be satisfied, and he will not be satisfied, with a heaven which is physical separation from hell, but not also moral separation from the taint, the contact, and the pollution of sin. So that he that looks at Christ as a king alone, is trying to get to heaven by his own deservings; he who looks to Christ as a priest alone, is making the cross a shelter for his sins, not the place where those sins are crucified. But if, on the other hand, we look to Christ as priest and king both, we see Him as saving us not only from the consequences of sin, but also from the presence, the pollution, and the power of sin; so that we not only get rid of the fear of its consequences, but progressively, if not wholly in this world, are delivered from the power and the pollution of its presence.

Interwoven with both, running through both, the

substance, the vitality, the virtue of all, is Christ, God as well as man. Now, if Jesus were not God, He could not be a king upon his throne; if He were not man, He never could have been a priest or a sacrifice. You will find in all his functions the assumption of his Deity always involved. Look at his priestly office: He must be man in order that He may suffer; because suffering was the penalty of sin, and He took our nature upon Him that He might pay that penalty. He was therefore man that He might suffer and sympathize; He was also God, for while human nature could suffer, it could not satisfy while it suffered. His humanity made his sufferings suitable; his Deity made his sufferings satisfactory. Hence, Deity inlaid every thought, inspired every feeling, partook in every action, was audible in every accent, and toned and coloured the whole biography and life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider Him in the next place as a king, and you will see how Deity is necessarily there. What is the realm of this great King? One day it will be the universe, partially it is so now; it waits for this earth, the prodigal orb, to be restored in order for the whole universe to be under his sceptre. But part of his kingdom is the human heart. Christ reigns within actually, now while he is prophetically promised to reign without. But who can see the heart—who can search it—who can note and control its aberrations—who can give it a new and a holy polarity—who can sanctify it, turn the rock into flesh, and deadness into sensibility? He must be God. He therefore who is my priest to pardon me, and who also to sanctify me, must be the maker of the heart in order to be the regenerator of the heart; and therefore God as well as man.

Thus, we have seen Christ in his priestly office, Christ in his kingly office, and Deity the inspiration and efficacy of both. Let us now turn our attention to the result of all this. "The counsel," the covenant, "of peace shall be between them both." I argue from this that it is impossible there could be peace between heaven and earth—in other words, it is impossible there

could be salvation except through Christ as a priest on his throne, or a king by the altar; or priest and king in one. Two things are required in order that I can be saved. What are those two things? That God shall see no obstruction to the going forth of his pardon; and secondly, that I should be willing on God's terms to accept God's way of pardon, and happiness, and peace. There is therefore a double work to be done; a work without me in reference to God; and a work within me, in myself, which is a royal or a kingly act. We shall find that the "counsel of peace," or in more popular phrase, salvation, can only be accomplished by them both. For instance, Christ as a priest offers up sacrifice, expiates guilt, pronounces a blessing; Christ as a king again rescues from enemies, and subdues us to himself. As a priest He expiates my sin by his blood; as a king He extirpates my sin by his power. As a priest, Christ pardons my sins, which is an act without me; as a king, He purifies my heart, which is a work within me. As a priest, He gives me a title to heaven; as a king, He makes within me a fitness for the kingdom of heaven. It is as a priest that Christ makes it possible for God to pardon me; it is as a king that He makes me willing to take God's pardon when it is so provided for me. What an awful idea does that give of human nature, that though we know that God is willing to save us, such is the instinctive enmity in our hearts that we need a divine work within us to make us willing to receive pardon! In his priestly office, Christ restores me to the divine favour; in his kingly office, He restamps upon my heart the divine image. He conquers and subdues to himself as a king those whom He has ransomed as a priest. He makes us his property by the purchase of his blood, He keeps us his property by the power and sovereignty of his sceptre. Thus I can see how peace can be between them both; namely, that as a priest He has removed every reason why God should condemn me. There is no reason in the universe why God should condemn a sinner that flees to him as a Father through Christ Jesus. Do you

assign the law as a reason? It is magnified; for Christ my representative obeyed it. Do you assign sin as a reason? It is atoned, it is expiated; for Christ my sacrifice has expiated it. There is no reason therefore in the character of God why He should condemn me. But you say He is just? Quite so: He is just; but He is just when He justifies them that believe in Christ Jesus. There is, therefore, no reason on God's part why I should be condemned, because Christ is a priest, and has made that atonement for sin which is the grand provision of God—a provision we reverently accept, and shall never be able sufficiently to explain. He has made it possible for the God that hates sin to pardon the criminal who has committed it, but who flees to Him in Christ for pardon. He has made it true that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Thus then there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" The language of universal defiance. "It is Christ that died; yea, rather who is risen again." Thus the priestly office of Christ has its aspect towards God; the kingly office of Christ has its aspect towards man. By virtue of the first He makes it possible for God to do what God delights to do—namely, to save my soul; in virtue of the second, He makes me willing by my renovated heart to accept and hail with gratitude and joy all the provision made for my pardon in his blessed and glorious Gospel. So at every point there is peace: if I look to God it is peace, for I see no more the Judge shrouded in the clouds of Sinai, but I bow the knee and raise my heart, and breathe the most beautiful words in the language of the world, "Our Father which art in heaven." All that made me shrink from God is put away; all that made me with the instincts of my nature recoil from his book is put away. I shall no more say, like God's servant of old, "We shall die, for we have seen the Lord;" but the language is reversed, and I answer, "I shall live for

ever, for I have seen that this Lord is my Father." And so God can look down upon me, and see no reason why He should condemn me; there is no reason in the law, there is none in me, there is none in sin; for the law is magnified, sin is expiated; I am willing to accept the provision of infinite mercy and wisdom, and therefore, justified by faith, I have peace with God; I can say to Him, in the language of adoption, "My Father;" and He can respond, in the music of heaven, "My son;" and if a son, an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ Jesus.

Thus we see where the fountain and source of peace are—namely, between the priestly and the kingly office of Christ, or from Christ a priest upon his throne.

Mark then, as inferences from this: first, the secret of universal peace, the only source of peace amidst the nations of the earth is the influence of the everlasting Gospel. You may as well try by Peace Societies to make sunshine at midnight, as to make peace without the Prince of peace. Peace over all the nations of the earth is not to be woven as cloth is; it is not to be made by diplomacy, it is not to be created by fine speeches about the inexpediency of war; the true way to create universal peace, and to render the soldier and the sailor, the battle-field and the quarter-deck relics of the past, is to spread more vigorously and speedily that blessed Gospel, which in royal hearts and in plebeian hearts creates wherever it is felt the peace that passeth understanding. Nations are simply groups of individuals; and in the present day, when popular power seems to be growing for good or for evil, so great nations will be more and more just what individuals are. Far better, then, first introduce peace into our own hearts, peace at our own firesides, and thus peace in our own nation. As nations cling closer to the Prince of peace, their hearts will beat in nobler and intenser unison one with another.

Let us gather from this our grand hope, that there will one day be universal peace. We have faith in God's word. There is no fear of its failing. Momentary

triumphs of Infidelity, or of Popery, or Tractarianism, are merely eddies in the majestic current, that will soon be absorbed into its waters and disappear. God has spoken, we have confidence in his word. I am just as certain that the religion of this Book—the religion that we know, and love, and live in—shall overspread the whole earth, as I am that another sun shall rise, or that the sun that now shines shall set behind the western hills. We must have confidence in God's truth. The Church may be in danger, the altar may be in danger, the priest may be in danger, the ceremony may be in danger ; but true religion is nearest to its most glorious victories when its peril seems to men the most imminent. It is God's truth, God is with it, and it must prevail. And the effect of all this will be, the work of righteousness shall be peace, the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. A day more beautiful than ever dawned in Paradise, is no doubt almost at our doors. The last conflict is approaching ; all Europe will soon blaze like a volcano. All ancient landmarks will be obliterated, thrones shall be again overthrown, dynasties will be shaken, the awful tumults of the people will be heard again ; but in the midst of all the Christian ear shall hear, ringing sweet and clear from the heavens, "Be still ; know that I am God ; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." After a short, a dark, and a sharp night, that beautiful day will come, sweeter than thaw after frost, than sunshine after night ; when the Prince of peace shall reign from sea to sea, and all creation, restored to its morning beauty, shall bask in the beams of an unsetting and a holy sun. All sin which rends creation shall be extirpated, all sorrow shall vanish away, tears shall be wiped away from every eye ; and the very dumb brutes will be restored and be happy—happy as they were in Paradise. It is said in prophecy, "The lion shall eat straw like the ox"—every creature in Paradise was made graminivorous. If you will turn to the record of the animal creation in Paradise, you will find it states expressly that every creature was made to eat grass, or to be what we call graminivorous ;

"To every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given"—what? "Every green herb for meat; and it was so." Animals were not made to eat each other. I know how difficult it is to prove this. I know that the naturalist will say,—The lion has a peculiar structure of the teeth; and the *viscera* of the lion differ from those of the ox: he is carnivorous, and not graminivorous. I answer, probably God made them thus in anticipation of what He knew would come—not what He caused to be, but what He knew would come—the Fall, the wreck and ruin of mankind. But He that thus made them at the first can cause them to return to their first food; and the promise is, that "The lion shall eat straw like the ox;" and that creation shall cease its groans, its expectancies, its woes; and be delivered from all its sad forebodings; and the stormy and the troubled surf of this world shall end in the peaceful calm of an everlasting and an undisturbed heaven.

Are we looking by faith to this priest for pardon—are we listening to this king for law? Are we trusting in what He had done as a priest, and to that alone, that our sins may be forgiven? Are we illustrating the sincerity of our trust by obedience to his commands as a king? for the same Christ that gives us by his blood immunity from the results of sin, gives us by his sceptre deliverance from its polluting power every day more and more.

LECTURE XXXVI.

OUR REFUGE IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

“ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”—PSALM xlv. 1.

THIS psalm has been sung in scenes of great tribulation for two thousand years. It is a psalm for the day. It was the favourite psalm of Luther amidst the scenes and storms of the great Reformation, and its words were the expression of his trust and confidence when the assaults of men were heaviest, their threats sorest, and their power greatest. Whenever circumstances seemed all but overwhelming about him, he used to say to his companions in the great work, “ Come, let us sing the 46th psalm ; ‘ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.’ ”

We too are entering on scenes in which the psalm will have an appropriateness we could have almost wished not to have had occasion for. War is no sooner ended on one field than it arises in fresh complications, the issues of which no human being can foresee. The loss of treasure, the loss of means, the loss of life, and the calamities entailed in 1859 upon the European nations none can estimate ; but we can retain in the midst of all, in spite of all, triumphant above all, our confidence in God, and feel as believers that our refuge is in Him, and that He is still here, a very present help in time of trouble. It is therefore inspiring to find the Psalmist lifting up his heart above the waves, and finding in every attribute of God a bay of consolation. So has it been with others in the worst of times ; and when no hand on earth can help, and no eye on earth will pity, it is a blessed resource that remains for the believer, as he

remembers I have One in heaven beneath whose overshadowing wings I can find protection, in whose paternal presence I can find peace; under whose all-encompassing attributes I have a shelter from the storm, a shadow from the heat, a refuge from fear, a very present help in the uttermost time of trouble. Every attribute in God is a believer's refuge; every cleft in the Rock of Ages is a shadow and a shelter for a Christian. If God loved us, but were not omnipotent, we might never be able to enjoy Him as our refuge; if He were powerful, but did not love us, his power might be arrayed against us; and if He had all power and all love, but had not omniscience, He might not know our trials; or if He were not omnipresent, He might not see our trials; but having all power, all love, omnipresence, and omniscience, we can find in Him a refuge always adequate, and always open; his great mercy bidding us welcome to it, his power when we reach it able to protect and to preserve us in it. How glorious then is the fact, that all the attributes of Deity arrayed against the least of sins in the sinner out of Christ, are combined for the protection of the greatest sinner that flees to Him by Christ, the way, the truth, and the life! How interesting the thought that this refuge is not in the past, nor in the future, but always in the present! "God is our refuge," is as true to-day, and shall be as true in the great tribulation, as it was two thousand years ago. He is not only our refuge, but "very present help;" always at hand, always waiting, always willing to help, defend, and deliver us. He is our refuge in all places; in the secrecy of our retirement at home, in all the recesses of the soul when it meditates within itself, in the sanctuary, and in the great congregation, in all the intricacies and associations of public and of private life, on the quarter-deck, on the field of battle, on the ocean's bosom and in the distant desert, in India and China, and on inhospitable shores; God is there and then, in all these places, always and everywhere, our refuge, our strength, our present help in time of trouble. There is no place so secluded from the light of heaven

that his eye does not pierce it; there is no distance so great that his arm cannot reach it; there is no sorrow so small or tribulation so minute as to be unworthy of his sympathy, and no suffering so great as to be beyond the reach of his consolation, mitigation, or removal of it. Wherever a believer goes—if he take the wings of the morning and flee to the uttermost parts of the earth; if he say, "Peradventure the darkness will cover me;" if he ascend into heaven; wherever he may be, he finds in his own heart a presence that cheers him in sorrow, strengthens him in trouble, refreshes him in trial, and makes him more than conqueror through Him that loved him and gave himself for him.

Not only is God our refuge in all places, but in all seasons. In the season of youth, to guide us, to save us in its slippery paths from falling, and to conduct us safely up to man; in the season of old age, when the strong men bow themselves, and the golden bowl gives notice that soon it will be broken at the fountain, and the grasshopper is a burden, and desire fails—even then, to gray hairs and old age, God is a refuge and a present help. In seasons of suffering, of losses, and crosses, and painful trials—in all the ripples of solitary sorrow, in the overwhelming torrent of national distress, God is to them that seek Him, and lift their hearts to Him, a refuge to which they may have recourse, a present help on which they may lean, a strength made perfect in weakness, that fails not in the least, and falters not in the worst of trials.

Thus present is God our refuge and our strength, in all the attributes of his nature,—his mercy forgives us, and is a refuge from the guilt of sin; his justice acquits us, his grace saves us; He is in Christ a refuge, a shelter, a trust, and a support to the humblest believer. And when we flee to Him, all things instantly assume an altered aspect, a different relationship to us who have fled for refuge, and laid hold upon the hope set before us. To the prisoner for Christ's sake, the prison glows with all the beauty and the glory of a royal palace. Suffering has lost its sting when it touches a believer.

In his case, bereavement, and poverty, and loss, and trial are painful, but they are not penal. This refuge, however, does not shelter us in this world from the ordinary incidents and accidents of a fallen world; but it lets no incident and no accidents touch us until the penal element has been extracted from them, and they have received a commission from the 'Throne not to hurt, but to work for good to them that love God, and are called according to his purpose. The fiery furnace became as a garden to the Hebrew youths; and its heated floor as a bed of roses. Wherever we have God our refuge, our present help, there we can say, with no feigned lips, "It is good for me to be afflicted; and though no tribulation for the present seemeth joyous, yet I am sure it is working out the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to them that are exercised thereby." When God is our refuge, and our strength, and our present help in time of trouble, He sanctifies all that is left to our good, and He becomes more than a substitute compensating for the absence of all that has been taken. If all the trees of our garden are cut down, the tree of life still remains; we have its shadow from the heat, and its pleasant fruits still to partake of. God's presence adapts itself to every taste, and every Christian derives from his presence that which suits his case, supplies his wants, pleases his taste, and fills his longing soul, in the language of the Psalmist, as with marrow and with fatness. When all else is gone, and we have nothing left, God is more than a compensation for all. One sun is better than a thousand stars; the riches of Christ are realities, the riches of the world are phantoms. The things unseen are real, the things seen are shadowy and ephemeral. No man who is a Christian can be overwhelmed by the greatest losses; no man who is not a Christian can fail to suffer, and suffer severely, even from the least of the daily losses that befall us in this present world. It is when a man can find a constant refuge in the bosom of his Father, a present help in the strength of Omnipotence, that his severest losses part with three-fourths of their severity, and his ordinary losses are altogether unfelt. And

when all takes wings and leaves him desolate and alone, he feels he is not alone; for He in whom he has all, and from whom he derived all, and whose hand has taken what He gave, is still his present help in this his time of trouble.

What in our case are the individual trials, afflictions, sufferings, that as individuals we now feel? I speak not of national or public, but of private and of personal sufferings. Are we under deep convictions of sin? Do we feel in all its poignancy, "I am guilty before God?" We have a refuge to go to; not that our sin may be canonized, and we and it go forth again to live together; but that there the guilt of our sin may be washed away, and we justified freely by the righteousness of One who was made righteousness to us, in whom we find a refuge from the guilt of our sin, and go forth accepted and acquitted, hating what is forgiven, and praising the unmerited mercy that graciously forgave it.

Are you harassed with temptations, trials, and evil thoughts, suggestions, propensities, desires? There is but one refuge to which you may take them; there is but one shelter from the angry and the scorching shower; there is but one to whom you can have recourse as to the clefts of a rock that is mightier than you. God is your refuge, in Him alone can you find shelter, there alone will every arrow strike only to recoil broken and blunted; there alone you will hear those blessed words, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not." Your trials will purify and humble you; but they will not destroy or even endanger you.

Have you the feeling that God has forsaken you, that your God has forgotten you, as many a Christian has said before? You must remember that, because you have not the conscious signs of the nearness of this presence always, it may not be the less near, less real, on that account. There is daylight when there is no sunlight; ceaseless sunlight would not be good, daylight is better and softer than sunlight, and more ex-

pedient for us. God may withdraw from us his comforting presence, though He will never withdraw from us his sustaining presence. God may not be a present comfort even when He is most felt as a present help; but He never ceases to be your refuge, even when your faith falters and your confidence fails; He changes not, you change; the cloud comes not down from Him, but rises up from you. The cloud will not last for ever; it will be dissolved and scattered, and the sunshine of his countenance will be lifted up upon his believing and adopted child; for He will never leave you, He will never forsake you. Are you surrounded with great troubles, vexed with cares, oppressed by many anxieties; fears within, and fightings without; dark reminiscences behind, gloomy prospects before; and do you fancy that all these things are against you? May not your case be that of the ancient Patriarch? He said, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me." But Jacob made a great mistake when he said this. Joseph was, and Simeon was, and Benjamin was only taken away as a pledge; and all these things, instead of being against him, were all truly working for him. The hand of God may be against a believer when the heart of God is full of sympathy with him. You may be a son of God, and yet you may be sorrowful. A beggar, without sixpence upon earth, may be an heir of glory in splendid and certain reversion. It is not by sense that we walk, but by faith. Our treasure is not here, but beyond the sky; and the sorest trials may be part and parcel of that paternal discipline which is preparing a child for his home, a son for the presence of his Father in heaven. Thus a believer, everywhere and always, in all time of his wealth, in all time of his tribulation, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, may say, and may sing, with ecstasy and in triumph, "God is my refuge and my strength, my very present help in this and every time of trouble."

What is needed to enable us to see all this? The great want in us all is faith. "Lord help our un-

belief." Faith is to a Christian what sense is to a natural man; and the objects believed in are as real to faith as the objects seen and heard are to sense and hearing. What we need, therefore, to be able to realize all the peace and all the repose that spring from the conviction in the text, is just that faith which man may define, but which the Holy Spirit of God alone can implant in the heart. Faith shows us, God is; history tells us, God was; prophecy tells us, God will be; faith reveals to us, God is; and not only is, but is related to us; and not only is related to us, but works for us, watching over us, ordering all things for our good; and making the most painful things subserve our interests, and things the most contrary contribute to our progress; melting the largest obstructions into impulses and elements of advancement from grace to glory, till we appear before God in Sion. And faith not only reveals God is, and thus becomes the evidence of things not seen, but faith is the appropriating grace. When I have faith, divine faith, implanted in my heart, I not only see God, but I take hold of God; I not only can see God is a refuge—faith can reveal that—but I can see also and say by faith, "God is my refuge and my strength, and my present help in all time of trouble." Nay, faith can enable me to say, "All things are mine; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death, or things past, or things present, or things to come—all are mine, for I am Christ's, and Christ is God's." Faith, also, can enable us, not only to see all these things ours, but to see God, and all that is in God, very near. Faith brings near. When I see an object, I see its shape, its form, its dimensions as clearly at the distance of a hundred feet, as if the sense of touch could enable me to measure and ascertain its form. So faith brings distant things near; it brings God near, eternity near, heaven near, the judgment-seat near; and these things brought near to me become the very atmosphere I breathe, the very food I live on, the constant and ceaseless companions of my progress through this world to a brighter and a better beyond it.

Can we then say, God is our refuge? Can we say, not in sunshine, but in shadow, He is our present help in time of trouble? Do we believe this truth, do we live on it? Our belief in it is measured by the trust we can put in it, and the pressure we can lay upon it, by the amount of peace and joy we can derive from it. That man in whose heart's experience this truth is the greatest, most continuous, shaping, colouring reality, is the man who believes most, who has the greatest confidence in God as our refuge and our strength, our very present help in time of trouble. Faith in mathematics, in science, is a natural gift; faith in Christ, as God our refuge, is a divine grace. Nature has left us the faith that concurs in the discoveries of science; grace is ever ready to give us the faith that is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

LECTURE XXXVII.

BE STILL.

"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."
PSALM xlv. 10.

THE forty-sixth Psalm is evidently from first to last a military or a war song. It assumes tribulation, warfare, in the midst of the world; and it points the Christian to his refuge, his safe and blessed retreat, amidst the war storms gathering from the distant horizon. God is not only our refuge, but He is also with us. "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire." If God is thus the source of victory, if the battle is not to the strong nor the race to the swift, then "be still;" do not be alarmed, agitated, and vexed; but be satisfied of this; that God will be exalted in the earth. Fear not for his kingdom, be not alarmed for his cause; not a hair of the head of his saints shall perish. Be still, and know that He is not man to repent, nor a creature to fail; but the mighty God, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

This prescription is suitable to the age in which we live, in the scenes that are opening on a world that appears to be about to go through its last baptism. What are some of the grounds of disquiet in the minds of true Christians? Why is it that we need the prescription, "Be still"? We answer, first, from the imperfection of our knowledge. We see but a fragment of God's procedure; we cannot see that out of evil He still educes good. When we behold over-

shadowing error, we think it will deepen and darken till the whole sky is overcast; whereas, by-and-by it is dissolved, and truth shines forth with all the splendour of the sun, and the momentary cloud seems to have only increased the intensity of the glory that succeeds, and follows it. We hear of divisions and disputes among Christians; we think the Church is going to pieces; but that is because we see but a part, we do not see the whole. If we saw the whole we should discover that the momentary discord is only preparatory to lasting harmony; and that the dispute of a day precedes the peace that will prevail through ages to come. We see through a glass darkly; we do not always recollect this, and because we forget it, and fancy that we can see more clearly than is the case, we are troubled, and disquieted. Because we are blind, we think the world is breaking up, and that God has left it to itself. Another reason why we are disquieted is, that we judge very much after the senses. We call that bright which we see to be so; we call that dark which we feel to be so; and we judge of God's procedure by the same senses with which we judge of things that are properly within their province, and ought to be submitted to their verdict. Noise seems greatness, but it may be very emptiness. Glare seems sublimity, it may be puerility in the extreme. We judge after the senses, and we are often mistaken. Christ's cross looked the meanest thing, it was really the most magnificent. Christ's grave in the garden looked a dark and a lonely spot; it was actually the birthplace of a greater power, the dawn of a brighter glory than ever shone from heaven upon the hills of earth and the habitations of mankind. We must not think that all is power which looks power, or that everything is misfortune that seems so. The most unlikely garb may conceal an angel from heaven unawares. The hand of God operates beneficent results when all appears to us inevitable catastrophe, calamity, and ruin. Another reason why we are disquieted, when we look abroad upon the world, and on the present state of the world, is

the hastiness of our judgment. We see what is sad now ; and we conclude all will be sad to the end. We judge of a long season from its character at the commencement. Yet you would blame very much the man who would judge of the excellence of a poem from the title-page. You would form a very poor estimate of his good sense who would pronounce upon the splendour of an imperial palace by a specimen of a brick taken from the wall, or by seeing a few stones of the foundation laid. Of the true Christian it is said that "he shall not make haste;" and again, "it is good quietly to wait." Another reason why we are disturbed is, that we form an atheistic judgment. We look at the world, and we leave out Him who is its harmony, its order, and its cohesion. A world without God would be the saddest spectacle, and its history would be the bloodiest tragedy. And if we look, and look no further, at the wars that are gleaming like lightning upon the east, the west—in India, in China, in Italy—everywhere, we should form a very sad and sorrowful conclusion. But if we can contemplate all that statesmen arrange, and all that warriors achieve, in the light of the sanctuary, we shall find that Italian and Indian, and Englishman and Frenchman are but the chessmen upon the board, and that God is the great mover of them all. They think they are independent agents, they are really the instruments in his hand, accomplishing his grand and magnificent designs. Do not judge after the senses ; do not think of the world without God ; but look upon the world in the light of Him of whom it is said, "The Lord reigneth ; let the nations tremble. The Lord reigneth ; let his people rejoice."

Having seen some of the obvious causes why we are disposed to take very gloomy views, and to be disturbed and troubled in our minds, let me explain what that stillness is that is here enjoined. God says through the Psalmist, "Be still ; and know that I am God." This stillness, or quiet, is not insensibility. Man must weep over the losses that are constantly taking place around him. He must grieve at fields that are red with

slaughter; he must deplore the necessity of the sword being taken from its scabbard, and the banner unfurled upon the field of battle. We cannot but mourn when we know that the wave of war, whether it be the wave of conquest or defeat, rolls laden with sorrow into ten thousand times ten thousand homes. We are not called upon to be insensible. Jesus wept. We are made not of granite, but of flesh and blood. Stoicism is not Christianity; insensibility is not the peace that passeth understanding. The stillness that is enjoined is not insensibility, but something far richer. This stillness is not fatalism. A fatalist is quite a different person from a predestinarian. You may believe in predestination, and yet not be a fatalist. The Mahometan is a thorough fatalist. The Moslem sits down when he hears of the pestilence sweeping through the streets of Constantinople, or when he hears the roll of the Russian drum and the boom of its artillery thundering in his rear; he sits down, smokes his *chibouque*, and exclaims in perfect ease, "It is the will of Allah—God's will be done." That is fatalism; not Christianity. There may be the intensest energy in action combined with a background of unbroken repose on God. There may be the stillness of confiding trust, and along with it the energy of active and of vigorous exertion. The stillness of the Moslem is the stillness of stagnation, or the calmness of an iron nerve, or the stupor superinduced by opium; it is not the "Be still, and know that I am God." This, which is here enjoined, is not the stillness of atheistic defiance. There is a stillness arising from a belief that God has forsaken the earth, that He has left the most splendid victory to the greatest strength. There is a stillness arising from the belief that the battle is to the strong, that the race is to the swift; and such confidence is full of scorn towards God and indifference to the sufferings of mankind. To exclude God, and to think that by our own arm, and might, and inexhaustible resources, we can achieve the victory, this is to imitate the stillness of Nebuchadnezzar when he congratulated himself on his Babylonian splendour;

the stillness of the Assyrian when he "came down like a wolf on the fold," and thought that by his own prowess he would gain the day. The stillness of a Christian's heart is an inspiration of a nobler and a more glorious stamp than this. It is not presumption. There is a stillness, or a quiet, or a peace arising from excluding God from the world, and thinking our navy and our army will do all; and there is a quiet resulting from including God, and so thinking of God that we ourselves shall do nothing. Now I know not which is worse; the atheistic sensuousness that excludes God from the world, and asserts that we can work the world without Him, or the infidel presumption that throws all upon God, and sits still, and says, "God will accomplish his purposes." God's grace is not a *substitute* for us, as many read the text, but it is *sufficient* for us. God's strength is not made perfect in indolence, in apathy, in presumption, but in trusting and in trustful weakness. Thus there are grounds of disturbance which are untenable, and there are grounds for a peace that are equally untenable. Let us therefore turn to that true stillness, the prescription from heaven, the possession of a Christian's heart, which is generated chiefly by the blessed assurance, "Know that I am God; I will be exalted amidst the nations of the earth." We find that the stillness, or the peace, or repose, that a Christian feels springs from the conviction or the experimental knowledge that God He is God, and will be exalted in the nations and in all the earth. It is God as revealed in Scripture that is the foundation of a Christian's peace. If I did not believe in a God, I should dread the falling of a leaf, the turning of a corner, the stumbling of a foot; but because I believe in God the Almighty, the Father of heaven and of earth, therefore I am not afraid. And were God other than He is described in the Bible, I could not trust in Him; were God ignorant, all might go to ruin without his knowing it; were God unwise, He might injure the very cause He designs to support; were God limited in power, He might not be able to help where help is most

important; were God not omnipresent, He might not see where there was suffering, and sympathy was needed, or where there was ruin, and restoration should be interposed; and were God unmerciful, we should never be pitied. But because He is the God that shines from every page, and speaks in every chapter of the Bible, I am still, knowing that God is my God for ever and for ever.

We have peace or stillness, not only from knowing God as revealed in Scripture, but from knowing God in his own past providential dealings. The antediluvian evil seemed once to have gained the supremacy: Christ's flock was restricted to a handful; evil, as far as we can judge from the records of it, had gained the day, and asserted its supremacy; yet it was not so; the Flood burst upon the earth, and washed away the guilty; a remnant was saved in sovereignty, and became the seed of a population countless as the dew-drops sparkling in the rays of an unsetting sun. The Assyrian once burst upon Israel with all but irresistible power; and when he came, he exclaimed, in the pride and triumph of his heart, "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man; and my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people; and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth." So said the Assyrian, when he congratulated himself upon approaching victory. But what did God say? "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself as if it were no wood. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness, and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire." So Pharaoh prided himself on his strength, thought Israel was in his grasp for ever, but just at the moment his pride was

stoutest and his hope brightest, the pathway that seemed to him a promenade to victory presented the awful spectacle of the walls of water that closed in and overwhelmed the hosts and chivalry of Pharaoh. Napoleon the First is another instance. All seemed to be within his reach ; kings, thrones, and dynasties were shattered by his touch ; the victory of the world seemed to be within his grasp ; and lo ! so weak is man, so great is God, the snows of Russia became the grave of his mighty army ; and that element, so soft in itself, wielded by Him that rules, sealed the fate and precipitated the doom of Napoleon. Thus, when I read the past, and find God has depressed the proud, cleft the sea for his people to pass through, led the blind by a way they knew not ; made every scene resonant with his voice, left the foot-prints of his presence upon every acre of the world, I can lay the stress of my hopes and confidence upon Him, and amidst all the convulsions of the earth I can be still, for I know that the Lord is God.

Another reason for this stillness should be our own personal and almost universal experience. There is no one, however obscure his life, however under-ground the current of his years, who may not see the shadow of God at every winding and eddy in its ceaseless stream. You cannot explain your past history without God ; you cannot account for your present position if you exclude God. Do you not feel that a tone and colouring has been given to your mind, a direction to your progress, an arrest here, an impulse there, that you cannot account for except by knowing that it was God ? Leave God out of the humblest life, and that life is a labyrinth inexplicable, unintelligible. Let God be seen in it, and the thread runs along it all that guides you through every perplexity, and explains every turning, and shows a divine hand leading the blind by a way that they knew not, and by paths that they had not known. All this, then, convinces us that God reigns and rules, not only in individual histories, but in the histories of the world, and in the movement of the nations of the earth. He reigns over the battle-field ; He is no unconcerned spec-

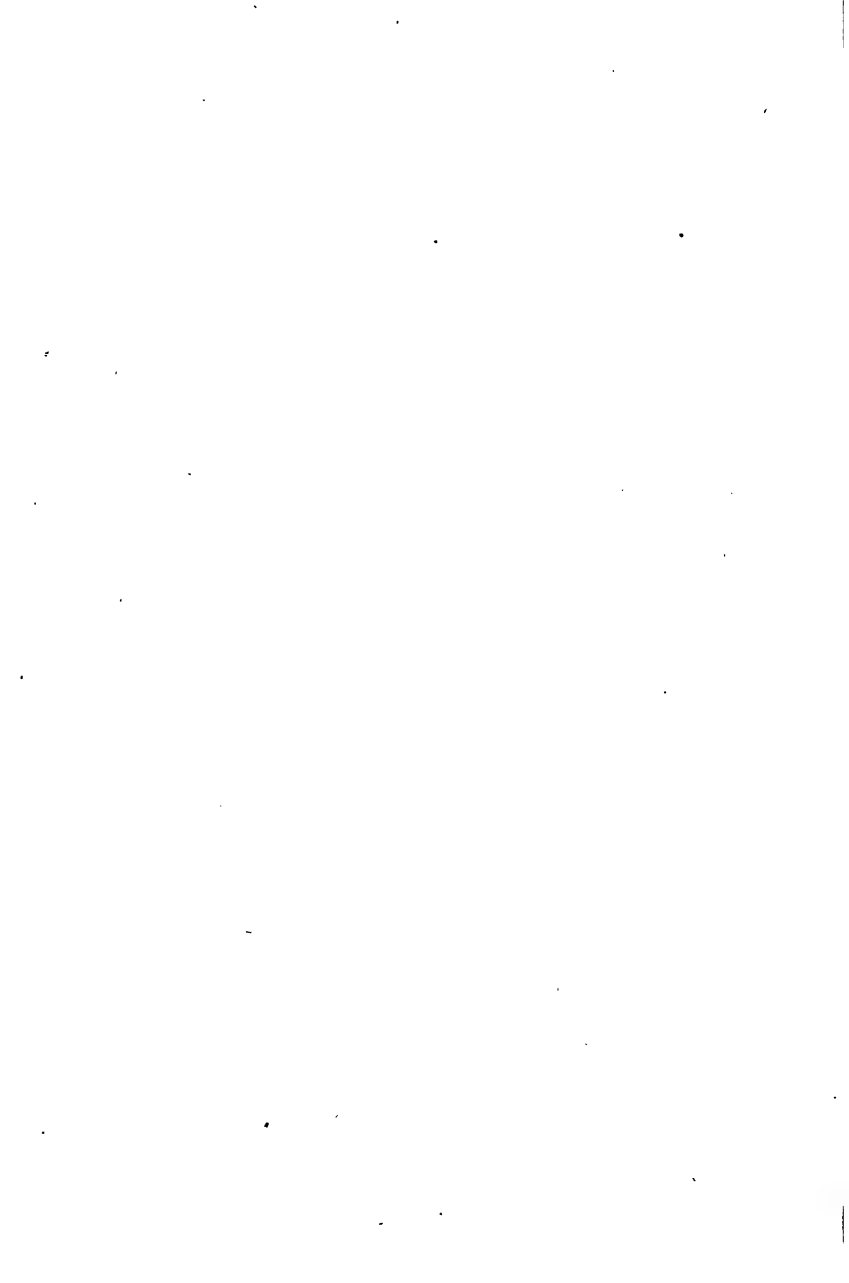
tator of the havoc. He sees where the guilt is; He knows where the misfortune lies; He sees who is there in the discharge of a stern but inevitable duty, and who is there the minion of a ruthless and unjustifiable ambition. And out of all the evil He will educe good, from the storms of war shall issue the calm and the sunshine of everlasting peace; the sword shall yet be beaten into the plough-share, the spear must be turned into the pruning-hook, and the most savage nations of the east and the most cultivated tribes of the west shall learn war no more. The Danube shall reflect his glory; the Euphrates shall make way for his progress; and the snows of Russia and the sunshine of Constantinople shall equally, beneath his plastic and regulating presence, redound to the glory of his name, and to the everlasting good of his believing and his trustful people; China and India shall sing his praise. When I think of all these things, I can prescribe with an emphasis with which I never prescribed before, "Be still, and know that I am God." The evil only shall perish, the good shall endure. Man is made use of to punish man, and to make a pathway for the progress of the saints of God. It is a humbling thought to the natural man, a magnificent thought to the Christian, that while Napoleon thought in his folly he struck out his own path, he was really a battle axe wielded by God for cleaving a pathway for the Gospel of Christ.

Come what may, Christians can be still; their hope is beyond the stars, their foundation is stronger than the everlasting hills; their cause, their destiny remains when all is overwhelmed and overthrown. The kingdoms of this world may be shattered, but the kingdom of our God only emerges into greater brightness. The flame that wraps wide Europe, and calcines mighty thrones, shall only light the saints of God to their everlasting home. The trees of the forest may blaze, but the bush on Horeb remains in the flame, unscathed and imperishable for ever. The ships of Tarshish may be tossed and founder in the waves, but the ark of God's people has Christ in the midst of it; it shall never perish.

The cities of the nations may be destroyed, but we have a city that hath foundations, whose builder and whose maker is God. "Let not your hearts be troubled." "Be still, and know that I am God." All things, disturbed kingdoms, desolated nations, broken sceptres, shattered thrones, the roar of artillery, the roll of the conquering drum, the blast of the trumpet, the cry of the wounded, the groans of the dying, have "a needs be." Be still.

See the expediency of such a prescription as this. It is by stillness, self-possession, and Christian quiet that we can best look around us, and estimate our position, and see clearest. It is in the calm, not the stormy sky, that we can best see the stars; it is in the still ocean, not the stormy one, we can see reflected a hundred fathoms down all the splendours of the sky. It is when our minds are at peace with God, and thoroughly satisfied that the issue will be right, that we can best look around us and see things in their right light, and come to the most just and consolatory conclusion. And it is by stillness that we are most prepared for all that may await us. The most collected and composed persons are the fittest for duty; the greatest minds are usually calm; high brows are still; holy hearts beat with unbroken composure. It is when the storm is expected, that the sailor reefs every sail and makes his canvas less; it is when the battle is looked for, that the general calls in and concentrates all his forces for the issue. It is by calmness, composure, confidence in God, that we can see the furthest, that we can act with the greatest energy. And hence the man who is a Christian by grace has generally been the bravest hero on the field of conflict or upon the quarter-deck. "Be still." How often is this prescription given in the Bible. "Rest on the Lord, and wait patiently for him." "It is good for a man that he both hope and quietly wait." Remember the Lord reigneth. What a truth is that! The Lord not only is, but the Lord reigneth. He is clothed with majesty, his throne is stablished of old. The floods have lifted up their voice, but the Lord on high is mightier

than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waters of the sea. This stillness or perfect composure in the wisdom, the power, the goodness of God, all enlisted on our side, encompassing, enveloping, and sheltering us, is, as I have stated, not only compatible, but necessarily compatible, with the most vigorous and earnest discharge of the duty that devolves upon us. And the very first duty that becomes us in the crisis which is thickening on the earth is prayer to Him that reigns, for our country, for our countrymen exposed to the perils and the calamities of war; and especially that God would be pleased to decide the great conflict of the nations, that his name may be exalted, his cause prospered, and ancient prophecies, that scepticism has denounced as obsolete, may be translated into modern history, that the nations of the earth may see and know that they were the inspiration of God.



APPENDIX.

IN order to prove that those who do not attend to prophetic investigation are impressed by the abnormal complications of Europe and Asia, and witnesses unconsciously to the fulfilment of prophecy, I will here append some remarkable extracts from the various representatives of public opinion. My first extract is from an American point of view :—

I. EVENTS IN ASIA.

"It is not surprising that bold theorists like Dr. Cumming of London, and other students of the Bible, should imagine they see 'the beginning of the end' of prophecy in the historic events of the past few years. There has been something strangely provocative of that idea in the return of the currents of strife and revolution to their original centre, the continent of Asia. The thoughtful have long anticipated and predicted such return, but while the indications were faint and gradual they escaped the common attention. Now, however, when the world has seen the great Northern Power of that continent arrayed against the nations of Europe; now that the whole Persian empire is swaying between the eastward march of Russia on the one hand, and the Indian ambition of England on the other; now that the entering wedge of the 'opium war' has been succeeded by a new and unexpected second assault upon the exclusive policy of China; now that the extent of that vast and stagnant empire has been shaken by the tramp of revolution; now that the conquering policy of Russia is expanding into railroad ramifications through the Continent *pari passu* with the canal and steam projects of European commerce along its southern and western margin—now that these things have become matters of history, the world seems to be awakening to the fact that Asia is to be the theatre of gigantic events in the near future; and grave statesmen find excuses for speculative solicitude in regard to the ultimate results.

"What precise turn these results are to exhibit is not a practical question, but the unmistakable tendency of events already passed or now transpiring is among the most momentous considerations of the day. The abrupt termination of the

Russian struggle with Turkey and the Western Powers was far more remarkable than the origin and incidents of the war itself, wonderful as were the latter. Its full significance is hardly, however, even yet discernible. With seemingly lowered crest the Muscovite escaped from a tremendous and rapidly exhausting conflict, but at once proceeded to avail himself of the appliances of an advanced civilization possessed by his enemies, to unite and consolidate his empire. The idea of commercial convenience, and consequent financial augmentation and strength, no doubt enters fundamentally into these schemes; but that this aim is singly or even mainly, as is made to appear, the design of the emperor, will be hard to impress upon those familiar with the inexorable policy of Russia. That icy despotism stands the iron type of military power in the nineteenth century.—Her network of railways is primarily to answer the same purpose as the wonderful thoroughfares constructed by Roman energy, and to perfect the communication between the centre and the circumference of the empire.

“Nor will it be sufficient that these means of instant communication ramify the empire itself. Already is the Czar busy with a counter-check to the Anglo-Indian encroachment on Persia, and the projected railroad from Tiflis, his trans-Caucasian centre-point, to Teheran, the capital of the Shah, marks the first of his colossal strides, to dispute the empire of Eastern Asia with all the world. To the same purpose have tended his aggressive spoliations on the Amoor river over his feeble southern neighbour in that quarter. In the case of Persia, the Shah is after all, and has long been, but a plastic instrument in the hands of the Autocrat; and even now European statesmen are perplexed to conjecture whether or not Persia acted in her recent English disturbance upon the assurance of Russian succour should matters reach a dangerous position.

“This conflict between Persia and England, too, now said to be closed for the present, is not without significance, and though it had seemingly very simple causes, it is possible the precise share the partial discomfiture of Russia in the late war had in it will never be known to the cabinets of Europe. Upon the side of England it was unquestionably but another of those events which, like the hand of destiny, have continued to impel the march of her Asiatic accessions. The difference in this case, however, has been and will be that she must encounter the rival pretensions of Russia, thus precluding the probability of that success which has hitherto attended her Eastern usurpations.

“Of the tendency of the events of the past few years in China—to which may be added the new relation occupied by Japan to the rest of the world—it is much easier to form an estimate. There were few men versed in the history of the ‘opium war’ who ever anticipated that China would have

remained as long as she has free from a second European drubbing. That war was but a preliminary buffet, before which the walls of Cathayan isolation—endangered by the senile insolence of the Chinese themselves—are eventually to succumb. It is possible this would have been repeated before now if the revolution in that country had not supervened. As it is, that astonishing convulsion of a people stagnant beyond all criterion is but another link in the general chain. Tai-ping-Wang could have sprung successfully into the character of a Chinese Mohammed only by the awakening consciousness of the people that godship did not dwell in the Tartar potentate. Two hundred years of undisputed rule had deadened the memory of doubt as to the Manchu divine right and divine person. It had also extinguished the vitality of the Ming tradition. But the English opium war taught the shrewd among the Chinese that their super-serene superiority was a deception and a myth whose absurdity stared them in the face. Such a man was the disappointed schoolmaster, 'the elegant and perfect,' Siu-tshuen. He had witnessed in his day the miserable farce of Chinese resistance, and the total and disgraceful overthrow of celestial valour and might. His literary studies acquainted him with the potency of the Ming *prestige* as a historical souvenir. He may or may not be a remote descendant. This is immaterial. All that was necessary was to make the Chinese Saxons believe that he was of the race of their own Harold, and the immemorial and ineradicable prejudices against the invader and usurper would come to his assistance. The whole scheme illustrates the sublime duplicity of the Cathayan character. The 'Prince of Peace'—Tai-ping-Wang—the 'Great Pacifying King'—could do no less than avail himself of the national superstition, and he therefore holds his followers enthralled with a belief in his indispensable divinity, while on the other hand he extorts their homage as the representative of the native nationality. He has caught a glimpse, faint though it be, of the power of the 'outside barbarians'; he is too shrewd not to appreciate it; he feels that contact is strengthening the ideas of his own people, and that their bleared and besotted vision is clearing to something higher; he therefore boldly plunders the Christian of an improved idea of divine relationship, flatters by Oriental policy, and frightens by practical performance, and meets the coming shock of events as a hero and a reformer.

"But the history of the revolution is nothing in itself. It is only as an evidence that the lethargic spell of centuries has been broken that it is important. Whether Ming or Manchu shall rule China, until the spirit abroad in the out-of-door world shall reach her she is inert and worthless. Already and naturally enough we find the rebel powers eager to exceed the government in patriotic resistance to the Canton aggression. Not, we presume, that Tai-ping-Wang has not sense enough to

see that the overthrow of the government forces would militate to his own advantage by destroying the idea of invincible might in the imperial rule, but that he also sees that the irrepressible sentiment of patriotism in the human breast would effect a general desertion from his cause if he should appear lukewarm against a foreign foe.

"The effect of the recent proceedings at Canton is the one important point to the rest of the world. The fate of the Chinese portion of the continent of Asia trembles in the balance there. The indications that Asia is to resume her ancient importance in the affairs of the world may hinge in no unimportant degree upon circumstances which have already transpired in that quarter. The knowledge that the Government is not invincible will cause its overthrow, in all probability, sooner or later. Pressed upon the north by Russia, from the sea by her open enemies, within convulsed by a resolute and popular rebellion, the redemption of the Flowery Land may be lodged in the elements which constitute the ruin of other nations. The events in Asia, everywhere, of the past few years are pregnant with meaning.

"The present aspect of the world is eminently fitted to command the attention even of men unaccustomed to reflect. If we look to the West we see a mighty nation covered with the wreck of fortunes of all magnitudes. Numbers in every part of the land have been precipitated from the summit of wealth into the depths of poverty. All ranks and conditions of people, both in the Church and in the world, have been equally affected by it. The root of pride has been torn up as if by a hurricane, which could neither be resisted nor eschewed. Multitudes, nursed in the lap of luxury, have, without preparation, and without warning, been cast forth and thrown on the wide world! Status on which so many were wont to congratulate themselves, and which they were accustomed to guard with sleepless jealousy, has been annihilated at a blow. Riches have made to themselves wings and fled, quickly followed by sunshine friendships. Like death, the panic has levelled all distinctions. Property, whether inherited or earned by personal effort, has perished. Like the gourd of the prophet, the prospects of myriads withered in a night. In many cases, the servant and the master have changed places. They who were proud to lend are now fain to borrow to sustain life, and help to begin the world again. The gains of many years, or of a whole lifetime, have been swept away with the besom of destruction!

"These events have a strong practical bearing; they show the vanity of life, and the unsubstantial nature of all earthly good. The expectations of multitudes of respectable families have been blasted as if by the breath of heaven! Copartneries in business, and settlements for life, have been, in the very act of formation, hopelessly deranged or set aside for ever. Provi-

sions liberally made for wives, and children, and dear dependents, have been scattered to the winds! In cases not a few, such arrangements were scarcely completed, and the eyes of the affectionate son, husband, or father, that made them closed in death, when the sound of the approaching whirlwind was heard, and this terrible aggravation of previous bereavement completed! The luxury of benevolence which consisted in attending to the neglected, and remembering the forgotten, in acting as feet to the lame, as eyes to the blind, and making the heart of the widow to sing with joy, has been summarily put an end to. In many cases, former dispensers of favours have now become humble suppliants. The work of Christian charity has in many instances come to a stand-still, and helpless age, during the last stages of its journey, has been deprived of its only prop. In a word, ruin in a multitude of circles has been paramount.

"If we look to the East, we behold on a scale, both vast and awful, the wreck of fortunes, accompanied with the blasting of prospects, and the loss of life: all the destruction which has been realized in all the oceans of our globe during the same period are as nothing compared with the havoc of Hindoostan. India, always a region perilous to life, alike from the climate and its diseases, has now become more so, to an extent which it were impossible adequately to describe. The horrors of war are but secondary to those of the barbarities which have just been perpetrated. They are altogether peculiar; there is nothing that resembles them connected with either war or pestilence. Even individual assassination, collective murder, and multiform massacre, present a comparatively winning aspect. It is difficult to say, whether the accompaniments tended to mitigate or to aggravate the misfortune. Collective is, perhaps, in some cases, preferable to individual destruction. Men and women, parents and children, have been cut down by the same blow, sacrificed by the same hands at the altar of the Furies, while others perished apart, but under conditions not less revolting. Death, under ordinary circumstances, has ever been arrayed in beauty as compared with the diabolical indignities, horrible beyond description, with which in many cases dissolution has been attended. Here the use of appropriate language is interdicted to us; it may not be polluted with the ideas which facts present. The soul shudders at the very thought!"

"It cannot be denied that public opinion anticipates extraordinary events. European policy resembles a vase so full that the addition of a single drop would cause it to run over; and the question now is whether that drop will fall at once, or whether the equilibrium will be maintained for some time longer. Without, however, on that account attaching too great importance to the rumours of war, we may be convinced that they are not altogether devoid of foundation. In the present

situation of public opinion the first important act which any Cabinet whatever may undertake to cause its political maxims to prevail over those of another cannot fail to become a cause of war. . . . If to these considerations we add the hostility of Russia to Austria, the neutrality of England and Prussia, and the agitated state of the East and of Italy, we see accumulated such a quantity of inflammable elements that a simple spark may occasion an immense conflagration. Does this spark exist, and does it only await the hand to put it in contact with the combustible materials, or is it not yet formed?"

II. MAHOMEDANISM.

I have often taken occasion to notice the expiring of Mahomedanism in Europe as the fulfilment of the "drying up of the Euphrates." It is striking to notice its steady evaporation from 1821 to this very year. The *New York Observer*, a judicious, accurate, and able journal, thus wrote at the close of 1858:—

"In various parts of the Turkish Empire, and in other countries where the Mohammedan religion has believers, the present is marked by fearful outbreaks of fanaticism resulting in the massacre of Christians. Last week we mentioned the Jeddah murders. Below we give minuter particulars, of that and other scenes.

"*From Bosnia.*—A letter from the frontiers of Bosnia of the 8th July, states that another sanguinary collision had just taken place between the Christian population of Bosnia and the Turks. The conflict had been caused by the tyrannical conduct of the fanatical Beys, who had declared that they would sooner take up arms against the Sultan than suffer any compromise to be made with the Christians.

"*From Candia.*—Accounts from Athens state that a terrible reaction of the Mussulmans against the Christians has taken place in Candia. A young Greek of Canea killed a Turk. The body of the Mussulman was conveyed to the mosque, and a general rising soon after took place. The European consulates, as well as the Catholic churches, were insulted. The French flag was fired on, and the hotel of the Turkish Admiral was threatened unless the Greek was put to death. The Greek was strangled by order of the Admiral, and his body was given up to the populace, and was dragged by them before the houses of the Consuls. The Christians are leaving Canea in crowds. The Turks at Retimo have devastated the churches in that town, wounded several of the clergy, and taken

possession of the citadel, the artillery stationed in it taking part with the mob.

"Disturbances have broken out in the province of Bagdad in consequence of the recruiting of the army. In several villages the authorities have been driven out. Omar Pasha has sent troops to restore order.

"Another account from Candia says:—Before every Consulate and every Christian's house the crowd made a short stay, hurling stones and shouting, 'We, too, will show you that we can get what we want.' On the morning of the 4th all the more wealthy Christian families were seen leaving the town in whatever ships were at their disposal. The Mohammedan population was still in arms, and in a fearful state of excitement. If it be taken into account that the Christian peasantry in the interior are likewise still in arms, it may be readily comprehended that we have not yet heard the last of these bloody events in Candia."

"*From Egypt.*—Accounts from Alexandria of the 6th state, that a considerable agitation against Europeans prevailed at Suez, and that it had been found necessary to send troops there in order to prevent a movement."

"*The Massacre at Jeddah.*—A correspondent of the London Times adds the following particulars:—Her Majesty's steamer 'Cyclops,' lately sent to the Red Sea by the British Government for the purpose of taking a series of deep-water soundings, had been lying for about a week in the harbour of Jeddah, whither she had conveyed, as passenger from Suez, the English acting Consul and his French colleague. Nothing whatever had occurred to show that the people of the place were animated with any extraordinary sentiment of hostility towards the Christian inhabitants. The officer of the steamer had made excursions in the vicinity of the town, and never once met with the slightest molestation or even insult; and even on the very evening of the outbreak several had been walking about in the bazaars until near sunset, without the least apparent symptom of the approaching storm. This was on the 15th ult. In the evening a few persons—Greek residents in the town—came swimming off to the ship, and stated that disturbances had arisen, and that they feared a conspiracy had been entered into against the Christian inhabitants. Everything, however, continued in appearance perfectly quiet; not a shot nor a cry was heard, though the savage work had even then already commenced; but the assassins had taken the precaution to use cold steel alone. The English Consulate was the first point of attack, and Mr. Page the acting Consul must have fallen under the blows of a crowd of ruffians, who followed up the murder by sacking the house and tearing down the flag. The unfortunate man's body is said to have been found literally hacked to pieces.

"Maddened with excitement the mob appears next to have

poured down upon the house of the French Consul, M. Eveillard. Here, however, the Kaimakam, or governor of the town, made some feeble attempt to interpose; the force at his disposal amounted to only eighty men, and whatever efforts they may have used, they did not succeed in saving the life of either the Consul or his wife. Both were murdered, and their daughter alone—a young lady, who, though under twenty years of age, appears to have possessed the spirit of a heroine—was rescued from the hands of the assassins, and, covered with an Arab cloak, she was carried to the house of the Kaimakam. Her face was laid open with a gash from a sabre-cut across the cheek, but before being dragged forth she had avenged the murder of her father by the death of the assassin.

“Early on the following morning Captain Pullen, still ignorant of what had occurred, sent two boats ashore. When they neared the inner reefs Turkish soldiers were observed warning them off; they continued, however, to advance until they found themselves surrounded by a crowd of about 600 men, who from the outjutting reefs poured a shower of stones upon the boats. The crews were fortunately armed, and soon forced their way back to the ship, not, however, without having been compelled to pour a volley of musketry into their assailants.

“The crew of the steamer entreated their officers to be allowed to take vengeance upon the city, if not by laying the place in ashes, at least by being permitted to land, even though at the risk of finding themselves, at most 200 men, opposed to a population of 40,000; but the Kaimakam sent repeated messages beseeching Captain Pullen to desist from all interference, warning him that his own house was surrounded by infuriated fanatics clamoring for the surrender of the Christians who they knew had obtained refuge in the house, and declaring that were a single gun fired, or one armed man landed from the ship, not only the lives of the refugees, but also his own, would, to a certainty, be sacrificed. This officer can doubtless not have yielded without a struggle, and no other argument would probably have saved the city from its well-merited doom. Even though it be granted that only a portion of the inhabitants were actually engaged in the massacre, none had a claim for pity where all had stood calmly by without stretching forth a finger to protect a handful of inoffensive men and women who lived among them relying upon their hospitality. Neither need the argument of the sanctity of the Turkish flag have had any weight with the crew of a British vessel of war. That flag had failed to extend to their fellow-Christians the protection upon which they had relied, and might well have been utterly disregarded.

“On the 20th Naamik Pasha arrived with his troops, and some semblance of order was restored. Miss Eveillard and other rescued Europeans were transferred on board the ‘Cyclops.’ In spite of the opposition at first made by the

Pasha, the crew and marines were afterwards landed with the British and French colours, and, escorted by a body of Turkish infantry, they were led to the newly-made grave, over which the funeral service was read, and the English and French flags were rehoisted under a salute of twenty-one guns. On the 24th the 'Cyclops' sailed for Suez, where she arrived on the 3rd inst., bringing home twenty-four refugees. The number murdered at Jeddah was twenty-one, and at the present moment not a Christian remains in the place.

"Naamik Pasha has some 200 or 300 of the ringleaders in custody; but, under the plea of not having the power of life and death, he refers to Constantinople. This is a repetition of the old routine—depositions are taken, references made backwards and forwards, while months elapse, and gradually the whole thing is forgotten or overlooked by all excepting the actors, until the world is again startled by a fresh outbreak, casting former ones in the shade. Thus, upwards of three years ago, an officer of the British Land Transport Corps on service at Marash, on the confines of Anatolia and Syria, was, together with his family, assassinated in open day, and his house burnt down over their heads. Up to this time nothing has been heard of any punishment having been dealt out to their murderers. More lately, again, the ruffians who at Jaffa broke into the house of an American missionary and murdered him and his family, with the accompaniment of every imaginable atrocity, have, by the same means which the Turkish authorities will bring into play in connexion with the affair at Jeddah, been exempted from the signal punishment which they ought long ago to have undergone, but for which now, perhaps, no one thinks it worth while to press, because all feel that the time has gone by when its infliction might have afforded a warning and an example.

"*What do these outbreaks mean?*—It is very evident that the spirit of fanaticism is rampant throughout the Mahomedan population. We do not doubt that the Turkish government will do all in its power to restrain and subdue it, but the government is weak, and in the extremities of the empire is powerless. The London religious papers look upon these events as the beginning of the end. The *Christian Times* says:—

"The massacre of the Christian population at Jeddah, by the infuriate Mussulmans, has excited great indignation this week, and attracted attention, not only as an awful fact, but as a symptom of a spreading danger. For a long time past the Christian population of Syria have been under the apprehension of suffering from the surrounding Mahomedans the treatment the English have undergone in India; secret agents are exciting the Mussulmans, and even at Cairo the destruction of Christians is preached. This, together with the affair at Montenegro, and the agitation in Candia, are the threatening symptoms of a malady difficult to heal—incurable fanaticism. It

will doubtless greatly influence the Conferences now meeting in Paris. Is the Sultan to lead his people, or is he to be chained to the past? Whether the stern revenge which probably the British and French Governments will think it proper to take on the people of Jeddah, and their firm support of the Sultan's liberal plans, will induce the Mussulmans under his sway to submit to progress and liberality, it is hard to foresee. Progress and liberty are too often watered with the best blood of the countries in which they eventually flourish.' "

" It is useless to bring public opinion to bear on such people. The only reasonable method of proceeding would be to give them notice to quit. The Turks, now as of yore, are simply encamped in Europe. Nothing would be easier for them than to decamp. That they must do so sooner or later is certain. They are absolutely and hopelessly effete. It appears even to be true that, by a natural process, they are disappearing from the face of the earth. Every year more Turks die than are born throughout the East. In a given time they will dwindle to so manifest a minority, that their subject races will take heart, turn upon and destroy them. For we must not suppose that they will be allowed gradually to die out, nor picture to ourselves the last Turk, with a venerable white beard, taking his departure for the depths of Central Asia, whence his ancestors originally came. When the opportunity presents itself, unless a prudent retreat is made by them in time, the episodes of the Janissaries and the Mamlooks will be repeated on a grand scale. They have themselves set the example, and proclaimed that the only thing that can be done with obstructives is to destroy them.

" If Europe has its duties towards Turkey, Turkey has its duties towards Europe. If Europe owes protection to the Ottoman empire, that empire owes consideration to the peace of Europe. Either the Turks are competent to maintain their own rights or they are not. If they are, the whole of this discussion is eminently gratuitous, and Admiral Dundas may as well bring the fleet home from Besika Bay. If they are not, they must rely on the succour of others, and it is as clear as reason can make it that this succour must be accepted, not on their own terms, but on the terms of those who lend it. The Porte cannot pretend to combine the advantages of independence and protection. If it goes to war on its own decision and its own responsibility, it may commence hostilities at discretion; but if it goes to war with British ships and French soldiers, it can have no right to wrest the initiative from the hands of England and France. The Four Powers have publicly acknowledged their desire and their obligation to protect the independence of Turkey, but it is perfectly preposterous to demand that, when the object can be attained by

peace negotiations, they should select, in preference, the process of a war, which would infallibly be terrible for humanity, and might possibly be ruinous to themselves. Such a policy would be destructive even to the very empire under protection. What would be the results of a general war no living being could venture to conjecture; but, if there is any one point certain, it is this—that at its close there would be no Turkey in Europe.

“But the policy of the Conference, it is said, is unsatisfactory to the State aggrieved, and unduly deferential to the State in fault. There is no wrong on the side of Turkey, and there is all the wrong on the side of Russia. To decide that Russia should be requested to evacuate at her convenience a territory which she had nefariously invaded, and that Turkey should be recommended to consider a cessation of the outrage as redress and compensation in full, is to arrange terms of very little equity between parties thus situated. It may be so, but the result is due to the very nature of the problem before the world. To ‘maintain the integrity of the Ottoman empire,’ in the sense sometimes attributed to the phrase, can never be a political duty, for the simple reason that it is a political impossibility. Europe has been ‘maintaining’ this fabric for nearly a century, and how has it been maintained? Half its dominions have been lost. Algiers, Egypt, Greece, the Archipelago, and Bessarabia were once portions of the ‘Ottoman empire;’—to what Governments do they pertain now? What ‘justice’ did Turkey receive at the hands of Europe when the Porte was excluded from the provisions of 1815?—when the Greek insurgents were protected by the cannon of the allies against their legitimate master?—when the Sultan was compelled by the Five Powers not only to pardon a rebellious vassal, who had threatened the very throne of Othman, but to confirm this rebel in the hereditary possession of his pashalic? In every instance of intervention which has occurred since the decline of the Turkish empire the interposing States have enforced conclusions theoretically irreconcilable with the rights of an independent monarchy. Nor could it possibly be otherwise. The plain truth is, that a dominion so unwieldy, ruinous, and unnatural, *could not* really be ‘maintained in its integrity,’ nor can all the Powers of Europe do more than mitigate the successive symptoms of decay, and avert by prudent concert the consequences of a violent catastrophe.”

III. RUSSIA.

In these Lectures and in others I have expressed an opinion deduced from the page of prophecy, that Russia is destined to advance Eastward, and end her history amid signal and consuming judgments in Palestine. Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix. are her history.

The following extracts are in some degree confirmatory of this polarity of Russia :—

"The Muscovite Jerusalem.—According to the *Univers*, there exists not far from Moscow a place rejoicing in the euphonious title of 'Voakréseenakoë.' The interpretation of this outlandish term is "The New Jerusalem;" in other words, it is a counterfeit of the Holy City. One of its chief places of attraction is a mock tomb, called the Saviour's Sepulchre, to which crowds of 'the pious' continually flock for the purpose of offering prayers for the deliverance of the real tomb. They are taught also to supplicate Heaven for the extermination of those who guard the 'holy places,' and to invoke a like curse upon such as have betrayed the Christian cause by becoming their allies.

"It appears that this imaginary Jerusalem consists of a vast temple, the site of which corresponds with that of Palestine, save in the absence of a bright sky and a glowing sun. The resemblance in the natural position is rendered perfect by immense artificial works, so as to remove the illusion almost beyond the power of discovery. On one side of the structure is a brook, upon the banks of which are inscriptions announcing that the pilgrim has reached Kedron, while on the other side is an eminence, called the Mount of Olives; then, on passing a spacious crenellated enclosure, the beholder sees before him a grand edifice, in imitation of the one erected over the Holy Sepulchre, having an immense cupola, and all the accessories belonging to its famous prototype. The effect is said to be quite bewildering. This impression increases after having penetrated into the interior, where all the details of the true temple are minutely copied, where the sanctums, the altars, the tombs—in all their dimensions—and where the painting and the ornaments are all of the same kind as those at Jerusalem. In the inner sanctuary, too, there are the seven lamps kept continually burning, and so complete is the deception that there is an equal degree of emotion excited among the ignorant peasantry as in the sacred grotto itself. Such is the Muscovite Jerusalem. The invention of this extraordinary sham is attributed to Alexia, father of Peter the Great.

"And now as to the motive for so strange a creation. Among the objects found upon the wounded Russians at Inkerman was

a Slavonic book, well besmeared and smoke-scented, and purporting to be a guide to the above-mentioned fabric. This work discloses a secret which the ingenuity of western speculators has failed to worm out. It shows that the Czars have had another pole of attraction besides Constantinople; they have fixed their greedy gaze upon the fallen city of the Hebrew. In order to gain possession of the Ottoman capital, they have appealed to the cupidity of their subjects; they have pointed to the sunny south as their heritage; they have depicted it as the 'land of milk and honey,' which they are destined to seize and inherit. But their day-dreams have not been content with so rich an inheritance as that. They have also aspired to plant their eagles upon the hill of Zion, to see their vultures hovering with outstretched wings over the desecrated fane of Salem. To realise this grand vision, not only have they operated upon the baser passions of their people; not only have they fed their lust for conquest and plunder, but endeavoured to excite their fanaticism, to awaken their religious enthusiasm. In short, they have preached a new crusade. 'The empire of the Koran must be destroyed,' say the Czars. 'The profaned and desecrated lands of the East, once hallowed by the tread of angels and blessed by the presence of Divinity, must be recovered, and the broad highway to this sacred prize is through the fertile provinces of the Turk. Constantinople is the gate to Jerusalem.'

"As a remembrance of this high destiny the Czars have erected in the heart of their empire a structure modelled upon the oft-visited church of the Nativity. They have styled it 'Voskresenskoi,' or 'the New Jerusalem.' Thousands of pilgrims visit its shrine every year, and they are encouraged to perform that 'holy act' as a means of impressing strongly upon their minds the thought of Jerusalem itself—that 'future capital of the Orient.' The Muscovite rulers teach their subjects that the deliverance of the Desolate City must not remain unaccomplished. That is to be the supreme end of all their fond hopes, and toward its attainment no species of cunning is left unemployed."—(*Illustr. News.*)

"The invasion of the Holy Places at Jerusalem by Russian schismatics is going on every day with singular rapidity. We mentioned a short time since with what solemnity the Russian church was sending preachers into Palestine, but we have now to state something still more important. The Russian Government has conceived the idea of founding seven new establishments in the holy countries for its clergy and its pilgrims. It is about to erect at Jerusalem a bishop's residence, a church, a consulate, and two hospitals. Two other hospitals will be founded at Jaffa and Bethlehem. The Czar has also, it is said, taken other measures to strengthen his influence in the Holy Land. Such facts, accomplished under our very eyes, are of a

nature to excite the solicitude and zeal of Roman Catholic Franc."—(*Union*, 1858).

" *Extract from a sermon on the cause of the war, by Rev. Wm. Schauflier, for many years a missionary of the A. B. C. F. M. in Turkey.*—But all this does not bring us a clear and true result in our inquiry, which is necessarily and naturally, what is the character of the *cause*? What are these thousands and scores of thousands fighting for? Ask the people in Russia. There is no man or woman, in Russia I mean, who is not familiar with the Emperor's design to seize Turkey, and reside in Constantinople. The more intelligent understand the further bearings; which are, Russia will rule the Mediterranean, and be a mistress in Europe. This they consider the divine destiny and mission of their nationality. The priests see still farther. The means, pretty successfully employed in Russia, to draw in by fraud and keep in by force, the members of religious communities, will be carried all over the Old World. Protestant missions will be crushed, Bible and Tract Societies crippled by laws and restrictions, and the Russian priests live in their millennial glory. Of these plans, which are perfectly transparent to every reasonable man in Russia, European Governments have comprehended at least the political part. Few see the ecclesiastical and religious, which, however, to us is the burden of the inquiry. To carry out these plans immense fortresses and navies are built, unlooked-for interferences attempted, revolutions kindled among the subjects of this country; false pretences spread before the world, war commenced in time of peace. Is all this right? No! No! Has Europe a right to resist it? Not a right only, but both right and duty—more still—a necessity."

" A certain authority is attached by foreign politicians to the statements of the *Morning Post*, on account of its real or supposed connexion with Lord Palmerston. We mention this, because that journal brings to-day a charge of a very grave character against the Russian Government—nothing more nor less, in fact, than that the discontent of our Indian troops, which has now broken out into mutiny, is the work of Russian agents, instructed and paid directly by the Foreign-office at St. Petersburg. 'There is abundant evidence,' says the *Post*, 'both in Fort William and Leadenhall-street, of the proceedings of these Muscovites, and we should not be at all surprised if some of the Oude nobles and functionaries, and some of the Brahmins, were under-agents in the pay of the paramount and superior practitioners who were immediately instructed by the Russian Chancery.'"

" During the first moments of a great public calamity there is such indecent haste in the public mind to throw blame upon somebody that people are not very discriminating whom they

select. The rule of the East India Company is, we all know, not perfection. But it by no means follows that the cause of this revolt is to be traced to any defects in the present system of government. It seems at least probable that the Sepoys, urged on by infamous Russian agents, intent only upon embarrassing British rule, have been led to believe that they could easily make themselves masters of the country, and thus relieve themselves from all duty and discipline. The *Nord* may sneer as it will at *The Daily Telegraph* for holding these opinions—borrowed, as it says, from the *Morning Post* and *Times*; but, if I mistake not, they will meet with pretty general acceptance in England, and will not be held to be very wide of the truth even on the Continent.”—(*Daily Telegraph*.)

“The prevailing passion of the Russian nation,” says the historian Alison, “is the love of conquest; and this ardent desire is the unseen spring which impels their accumulated force in ceaseless advance over all the adjoining states. Domestic grievances, how great soever, are overlooked in the thirst for foreign aggrandisement. In the conquest of the world the people hope to find a compensation, and more than a compensation, for all the evils of their interior administration. Every Russian is inspired with the conviction that his country is one day to conquer the world; and the universal belief of this result is one of the chief causes of the rapid strides which Russia of late years has made towards its realisation. The meanest peasant in Russia is impressed with the belief that his country is destined to subdue the world.”

“The leading journal lately remarked in reference to the speculations afloat as to whether the sleepless agency of Russia was at work in Persia, China, and India—‘that it would be a much more pertinent inquiry whether the same agency was not in full activity in this country.’ That there is need for such inquiry we need only point to the fact, that never at any former period were so many orders from Russia and its Government in the hands of our engineers, shipbuilders, and founders. All the material to be thus supplied is either intended avowedly for the purposes of war, or can be made available in the hands of our late enemy for such. It is thus to be feared that the occurrence of a fresh misunderstanding, or the outbreak of a new quarrel, about the ‘sick man’s’ professions, will find Russia prepared to encounter, it may be, a ‘world in arms.’ It is painful to think that the munitions of war on which she will then rely for vindicating the quarrel which she will only be too eager to provoke, have been forged in the workshops of Great Britain. It may be contrary to sound maxims of peace polity to interfere in this matter; but it is easy to fancy the surprise—not unmixed with regret—which our brave soldiers and sailors will feel, when they discover that the guns of the battery which they have at the expense of so much blood suc-

ceeded in silencing, were fabricated by the hands of their own admiring countrymen! Verily Russian agency is at work, and that at our own doors."

IV. ROME.

I have also frequently referred to the rapid decadence of Romanism, and the probable approach of her final judgments. Let anybody take up the Roman correspondence of a daily paper, and he will be struck at the rapidity with which events rush to a crisis. *The Times'* correspondent thus writes very lately :—

" At Rome, as I have shown in former letters, things are not so bad as this, but there are plenty of other grounds of complaint. The Romans, however, no longer condescend to details—they have long since made out their case to their own satisfaction and to that of all impartial persons who have taken the trouble to investigate and consider it. They comprise all their grievances under one head—that of clerical government. They regard it, and justly, as the source of all their sufferings, and the one great bar to the progress and improvement of their country. To it they trace every evil they endure. It is against the rule of the priests that they have repeatedly risen in insurrection, that they continually tacitly protest, and that they constantly threaten a revolution, prevented only by Swiss mercenaries and foreign garrisons. It is not against the Pope personally that their dislike is directed; the question can hardly be said to be that of his temporal sovereignty, still less that of his spiritual authority. I am far from saying that he is either loved or respected in his dominions. His weak and vacillating character is not calculated to command the latter feeling. When there was lately a talk (founded, I believe, in part, on a steam-corvette having been ordered in England) of his making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the wish was pretty generally expressed that he might never return to Rome or have a successor there. But he is, in fact, too insignificant a political character to be the object of very bitter hatred. With a secular Government, a lay Administration, he might be a fair enough Prince Regnant as times go. So feeble a character would probably always be more or less under the sway of his Prime Minister. What the Romans desire is to replace Cardinal Antonelli (the present real ruler of the Pontifical States), his clerical colleagues, and the whole battalion of official priests and prelates, by laymen. If it be laid down that a priest-sovereign can govern only by clerical Ministers, then there can be no doubt what the Romans would demand. Their cry would be, 'Down

with Pope, Cardinals, Priests, and Prelates! The knotty question, which has never yet, I think, been frankly answered, is, whether the Papacy be incompatible with the civil institutions of the 19th century? The Romans ask why, if it be not thus incompatible, the suggestions contained in Louis Napoleon's well-known letter to Edgar Ney be not adopted? They ask for secularisation. They do not see why the Pontiff—a temporal as well as a spiritual potentate—should restrict his choice of Ministers and public functionaries to a handful of ecclesiastics, to the exclusion of his 3,000,000 of lay subjects. Some of the upholders of the present system have asserted that the Roman prelates are laymen. It is certainly not necessary to have taken priest's orders to be a prelate or even a cardinal; but it is idle to say that the peculiar class which in the Roman hierarchy are styled prelates do not form part of the ecclesiastical caste, sharing its interests, ideas, and prejudices. If it be maintained, as I have somewhere seen it done, that they are the pick of the laity, specially adapted to administrative functions, it is easy to overthrow this assertion by notorious facts. The education of the prelates and the restrictions imposed upon them tend, on the contrary, to incapacitate them for rulers and administrators. The chief studies of young men destined to the prelacy are theology and canonical science. By the Canon Law they are forbidden to exercise any trade, to be bankers, manufacturers, or merchants. This can hardly be considered a good means of qualifying them to become Ministers of Finance, Commerce, Public Works, or administrators of towns or provinces. Of medical science they are forbidden to know anything; they are not even permitted to be present at a surgical operation. Nevertheless, all the civil hospitals in the Roman States are under the direction of prelates; the care of the public health and sanitary establishments of all kinds are exclusively confided to them. They are forbidden to serve in the army, and it is therefore not to be wondered at if they have always displayed singular talent as military organizers, and if '*Soldat du Pape*' has become a byword of derision in European armies. Celibacy is strictly imposed upon them, as the most indispensable condition of their remaining members of the ecclesiastical caste. The ablest, the most distinguished prelate, if he marries, ceases to be one, and is held no longer fit to share in the government of the country. It is hardly necessary to point out the effect of this last strictly-enforced condition. To say nothing of its leading to vice, even of the most shameless kind, it precludes those ties which most strongly attach men to their country. With regard to this point, one of the most zealous supporters of the present Roman system defined, in few words, as follows, the arguments presented by the opponents of ecclesiastical government:—'The priest, destined to defend the interests of Heaven, knows nothing of those of the earth; having no family, the prosperity of the country is of little im-

portance to him; separated from society, he cannot know its true wants; with him the *esprit de corps* overrules the spirit of nationality. The late M. de Rayneval stated these arguments with the intention of refuting them, a purpose in which it is pretty generally acknowledged that he signally failed.

"It will not be alleged, even by the bigoted, that there are not among those who profess the Catholic faith, and are sincerely attached to it, both in Italy and elsewhere, men of enlightened, honourable, liberal, and tolerant minds. Many of these have always desired, and they still desire more earnestly than ever, and in the interest of the faith to which they belong, that the Papacy should be disembarrassed of the onerous burden which temporal power imposes on it, and they are convinced that if it were so disengaged it would be much more respected and more independent.

"That opinion is, I find, making some way even among ecclesiastics. It is perhaps a bold opinion for a priest to advocate publicly; one, however, has been found to do so. A French ecclesiastic, the Abbé J. H. Michon, has just published a pamphlet of 62 pages on the subject, entitled *La Papauté à Jérusalem*, and he supports the proposition implied in that title with much good reasoning, and at the same time with the greatest respect for the Holy See. He thinks that the influence of modern ideas having produced no effect on the Roman administration, the progressive element of the nation has become a formidable enemy to the stationary element of the Pontifical Government; that the old machine may, it is true, go on well or ill, so long as it is aided by foreign diplomacy or foreign occupation; but that the moment these are withdrawn the Papacy will be exposed, helpless, to revolution, and that the danger is imminent. The solution of that difficult question is not to be found, the Abbé Michon thinks, in political, administrative, or civil reform, nor in the secularization of power, which would encounter innumerable obstacles in the clerical organization and the prejudices which control the Papacy. It is to be found only in the abdication of temporal power. He is not of opinion, that in such a case, the capital of what may be termed the Spiritual Papacy could be Rome. It would lose in dignity, and would still suffer from political complications. He believes that there is but one city, which out of Italy, and indeed out of Europe, presents conditions indispensable to its independence and grandeur, and where a new era for the mission of a true apostle would open, and that city is Jerusalem. The Abbé is aware that the project would not be over-pleasing to the political world of Rome, who would not willingly exchange a grand and splendid seat for the lowly but hallowed residence of Jerusalem, though he assures us that the plan has gained the acquiescence of several political personages in Europe. At Jerusalem the Pope would cease to be a foreign Sovereign, and would become, what he was in the commencement, the spiritual and

inviolable head of Catholicity. There no Government could exercise an undue influence over his acts. As the Sultan is now protected by the whole of the Powers for the benefit of Europe at large, so, but in a still greater measure, would the independence of the Pope be guaranteed by all Catholic countries, while the prestige his spiritual authority would gain by its exercise in the Holy City, where the stupendous events on which Christianity itself reposes were accomplished, is incalculable. In its material interests the Papacy would be better off than it is at present; its resources would be multiplied, as there is not a Catholic Power that would hesitate to contribute to them. Rome would receive from Spain not less than 3,000,000 frs. annually; and, as a purely spiritual power, the Pope would be spared the expense of a political status. The Abbé Michon concludes as follows:—'May Rome not refuse to recognize before it be too late who are her true friends; may she distinguish between those impetuous and indiscreet writers who urge her to extreme measures in order to exercise dominion over her, and to make use of her, and the modest and moderate men who have undertaken the ungrateful task of saying what they believe to be the truth, and who would blush to have recourse, even to please her, to a system of adulation which is an insult to the holy cause they defend.' . . . The chief feature in the social state of Rome is decidedly an abhorrence of Papal government, and, possibly, it might be added, an increasing indifference to religion. Of the latter point, however, I cannot speak with certainty; only I do know that the day before yesterday (the Feast of the Annunciation), when the Pope performed mass in the church of Santa Maria del Popolo, there were not above 200 persons in the building, besides officials, and very few in the streets to see the display of military and state carriages, and receive his Holiness's blessing as he passed. I am told, indeed, that it is not unusual for the people of Rome to run up side streets or into houses as they see the Pope's carriage coming along, in order that they may not be obliged to do him reverence. This, surely, is a sad falling off from the days when a Gregory, an Innocent, a Julius, or a Leo thundered forth his decrees from the Vatican as 'the servant of the servants,' and yet the Omnipotent Lord here below!

"In England we find the Papal system modified according to the exigencies of an heretical land and an unbelieving race. Would you know what that system is in its full development, go to Rome. You will not at first be conscious of the horrors with which you are surrounded. A certain season must be given to day dreams in the Forum and to night dreams in the Coliseum. The artist's enthusiasm must be allowed to satiate itself on the marvellous marbles which ancient art has bequeathed to us, and among those wonderful pictures which seem to prescribe the limits of the painter's skill. There comes a time, however, when the feeling for these things

passes by. Man was not sent into the world to dream away life among ruins, nor to practise dilettantism in any of its alluring forms. Mix, then, gradually—but with exceeding caution—with the Italians who inhabit this holy town, and learn from them the meaning of their lives. You will doubtless meet with exaggeration enough—possibly with falsehood,—but on the whole there will be such a concurrence of testimony in proof of the unutterable turpitude and atrocious tyranny of the Papal Government that no indifferent person could refuse acquiescence in the testimony produced. But, if words will not convince your mind, look around you! What you see—that scene of ruin and desolation—that hotbed of fever, with its stench and miasmas, was once the capital of the world. When heathens held it, and the high-priest, with the silent virgin by his side, ascended the Capitol in honour of Jupiter, Rome was supreme among the nations. In the hands of Christians, and when the self-styled Prince of the Faithful on each returning Easter-day ascends the balcony of St. Peter's to bless the Holy City, what has not Rome become! If it be the case, as all history appears to suggest, that nations and kingdoms, even as men do, perish and decay from the effect of their own vices and corruptions, surely the sentence of condemnation has been branded deeply enough upon the brow of Pontifical Rome. But the ruin, and the sickness, and the poverty, and the desolation above ground are as nothing compared with what passes in the interior of those Roman houses and in the dungeons, the dark secrets of which are but occasionally revealed by the few prisoners who ever escape from their chains to tell the tale. We have not space nor time just now to enter upon the subject, but it has been well ascertained that within the last few years horrors have been enacted in the Roman prisons for which parallels must be sought in the dungeons of the Spanish Inquisition when that tribunal was at its worst. But the physical torture—no! nor the imprisonment of hundreds and thousands of innocent men—is not all. Worse, far worse, than this is the unutterable moral pollution which overflows upon every wretched cottage and miserable lodging in this Papal land. Get some Roman who has accorded you his tardy confidence to sit by your side under an old archway, when the hot air and bright sun of Central Italy drive you to some cool shelter, and there hear what he has to say of the doings of yonder sable-stoled priests, who sweep past you in silence and in gloom. Hear his story of what priests do at Rome, where they are omnipotent, and you will see reasons to be thankful that your lot was not cast among the pollutions to which every Roman born is subject—he and his family. *Civis Romanus sum!* How pathetic a complaint do the words now imply; how much misery is involved in that brief phrase!

"We, of course, can only concern ourselves with the story of modern Rome as a political question. The Pope of Rome to

as is but a temporal prince, who grievously oppresses his miserable subjects, and whose misdeeds are likely to hurry on that explosion in Central Italy which sooner or later must come. The French garrison has been reduced, and the Pope, in a fright, has sent off for another Swiss regiment to guard him from the consequences of the too enthusiastic loyalty of his subjects. The police espionage of Rome has been screwed up to the level of that of Naples. The project for withdrawing the paper currency has proved a failure. Every obstacle is thrown in the way of those who would carry out the projected railroads; for the Cardinals have come to the conclusion that the instant their wretched serfs begin to travel and mix with their fellow-creatures there is an end of their dominion. Only think of what the condition of that population must be, which may become too enlightened by contact with the lazzaroni of Naples! He would be a bold man who should venture to predict with absolute certainty the moment when that power which has held the human race in thralldom for so many centuries shall fall to rise no more; but certainly the foundations of the Papacy, as a temporal power, appear sadly shaken just now. Were the French garrison withdrawn to-morrow, the next day Pio Nono might reckon himself fortunate if he escaped the vengeance of his subjects in the most cunning disguise which the craft of his advisers could suggest."

V. EARTHQUAKES.

I have alluded to our Lord's prediction of earthquakes as premonitory of the eve of this dispensation. I have observed that, within the last ten years, more earthquakes have occurred than in the previous century. I instance one, and add to it the remarkable article of the *Times* :—

"A letter from Naples of the 18th inst., gives the following fuller particulars of the shocks of this frightful earthquake :—

"Naples has just been visited by several shocks of earthquakes. No great damage occurred in Naples, as the buildings are strong, but no doubt the fright and the night air will cause many of the sick, who were brought out in the slight covering of night, to die of cold. The following is the news which reached us last night from surrounding parts :—In Sala there have been some shocks. In Atene half the houses have fallen down. In Padula more than a hundred houses have fallen, and many lives lost. In Polla the disaster is great, and among the many victims the whole of the brigade of gendarmes. In Auletta, Petrosa, and Caggiono, the deaths and destruction of property are great. In Salerno many edifices are rent in and

out ; two churches and the barracks severely injured. A despatch from the intendente of Banlicata has just reached, stating that in Potenza the earthquake was most severe, and has caused much damage : many buildings have fallen, burying a great many families. From Bari the telegram is incomplete, merely stating, 'The inhabitants in great numbers have——.' Vesuvius is now in full activity, but for some days previous to the earthquake no fire issued from the crater. Whenever the mountain emits fire or lava we feel quite safe, and you may well suppose how gratifying is the present appearance of our safety-valve. Whatever accounts you may read of the state of this city at the time of the shocks, it will fall short of the reality. Women were seen carrying their children—men helping some old father or mother, or some sick person wrapt up in the first covering available. Women screaming, tearing their hair, praying and calling on their patron saint and the Madonna Immacolata, all passing frantically in densely-crowded streets. The King, on hearing of these disasters, ordered the public functionaries not to spare anything in the shape of assistance. His Majesty directed the intendant to proceed to the scene of the catastrophe, and authorised him to make use of the communal and provincial funds to aid the sufferers.

"A shock of earthquake was felt in the night of the 18th in the valley and on the mountains near Libenzall (Wurtemberg), as well as in that town itself. The oscillation appeared to be from north to south. The vibration was so strong that many of the houses were felt to tremble, and the windows rattled.

"The occurrence of an earthquake in Europe, were it even slight in character and partial in its effect, would be a phenomenon well worthy of notice amid our political difficulties and commercial embarrassments. We are so accustomed in these temperate regions to the regular play of those great laws of nature which are in accordance with human security, that when we hear that for many thousands of our fellow-creatures the *Dies ira*—such as Dante would have conceived it—has dawned without warning, we cannot but pause amid the usual routine of life, and mark the instability of our own position. The sun rises and sets, day follows night, to-day is as yesterday, and to-morrow will be the same ; our own calculations are made, and we assume that all will go on as usual while we are playing out the parts assigned to us upon this world's stage. The thought that the stage itself is undermined, that the slightest change in the chymical elements beneath our feet would hurry us all off to a swift destruction, and that our normal condition is that of men separated but by a hair's breadth from a catastrophe which would sweep away this earth and all things on it like a parched scroll, is not one which frequently presses itself upon the consideration of the digging, spinning, scheming 19th century. Let us admit that, according to all observed

phenomena, the British islands would appear to be tolerably safe from the consequences of volcanic action, and that as yet there are no signs abroad to suggest the conclusion that the sequence of human beings upon this planet is at an end. We may be caught, and we have been caught in other ways. The blight of a single esculent root has swept away millions of our fellow-countrymen within the last few years, and in a manner infinitely more terrible than that in which many thousands of the Neapolitan population have just been destroyed. The incidence of such calamities is not confined to any particular quarter of the globe. They fall within the tropics in one form, upon the temperate zones in another, and even amid the long-continued gloom of the Polar winters the poor Esquimaux are periodically cleared off into eternity by villages and by tribes. In reading, then, this account of the earthquake which has just torn up the soil of the kingdom of Naples, we should not think that the dealings of Providence with human beings are unequal or unjust, nor lull ourselves into false security, as though the Neapolitan peasants were exposed to sufferings from the equivalent of which the luxurious Londoner is free. In the year which has just expired we have had our Indian mutiny and our commercial crisis, as they have had their earthquake and their own especial forms of calamity.

"The catastrophe in the South of Italy seems even by the accounts we have as yet received to have been of a very fatal character. The popular estimate places the loss of human life at about 20,000 persons—the Government computes it at a lesser estimate. If there be exaggeration in the first calculation, as is probable enough, it is certain, on the other hand, that owing to the rupture of the electric wires and the suspension of communication the Government cannot have received full accounts of the extent of the loss from many of the outlying districts. It is also in accordance with all we know of the policy of Southern Governments rather to underrate the amount of destruction in such cases, lest the natural alarm of the population should degenerate into wild and unmanageable panic. The immediate destruction of human life, however, will constitute in the long run but a slender portion of the suffering consequent upon this great calamity. Towns and villages are destroyed or half destroyed in every direction. The daily labour of the population is paralyzed, and even in those fertile regions the great masses of the population only exist by hard and daily exertion. The most ruinous violence of the earthquake seems to have spent itself mainly upon two provinces, but in a lesser degree the area of its action was far more extensive. Some idea of its violence may be formed from the brief notes of intelligence which have as yet reached us. In Polla there was so great a loss of life that 300 bodies have been already dug out of the ruins, and the ruins have not yet been fully explored. In Castelsano, which has been levelled

with the ground, 400 persons have perished. In Lagonegre inhabitants had timely warning, and made good their escape, but the town experienced three shocks in seven hours. Most all the buildings, inclusive of the church and the telegraph station, were cracked. Nothing was solid enough to resist the action of the mighty subterranean agencies at work. We will take but another instance, which shall be that of Anagni, the capital of Basilicata. This is a town of 12,000 inhabitants. Not a single house is there left fit for human habitation. 'The palace of the prefecture, the military and civil hospital, the barracks of the gendarmes and of the reserve, the college of Jesuits, the churches, and especially the cathedral, are all rendered useless, and no one can without danger cross his own doorway. They were continuing to disinter the numerous victims, the number of whom was unknown. The whole population who had been in the open air were beginning to take shelter in wooden barracks, which had been erected for the purpose.' We give this example as one which will show to what sufferings these poor people have been subjected, independently of their dead and of their sorrow for their dead. It would be impossible, we are told by those who have witnessed these terrible scenes, to exaggerate the terror and desolation which universally prevail. The inhabitants of the districts which have been so severely visited know what they have suffered, but they know not what they may suffer next. We published on Thursday a fearful list of towns which had all been completely or partially destroyed, but there are others concerning which the Government has not as yet furnished particulars, and the worst inferences are drawn from this official silence. All that could be done at the first outbreak of such a dire calamity seems to have been done or attempted. Beds, medicine, lint, food, nurses, and wood for barracks have been forwarded with all speed to the scenes of this disaster. In one particular, however, the benevolent action of the Government has been checked in a manner which can scarcely afford matter for surprise, when we remember what the character for speculation of the Neapolitan officials has notoriously been, and how the Government itself has misappropriated such funds. Orders were issued from Naples that the communal treasuries should be opened for the relief of the sufferers, but the money had disappeared.

"The capital itself does not seem to have actually suffered any disaster. There, as elsewhere, the action of the subterranean agencies was felt to such a degree as might have justified apprehension even in firm and sober minds; but, not very unnaturally, the wildest terror seems to have seized upon the inhabitants. They rushed out of their houses as soon as the awful cry of 'The earthquake! the earthquake!' was raised, and they felt the first shocks. For nights they encamped in the open squares. That hideous horde of ruffians which may

be found in every great city, but which is only seen when revolution, or pestilence, or when, as here, an earthquake is a work, pervaded the streets in all directions, but chiefly directed their energies upon the Toledo, where the principal and wealthiest shopkeepers carry on their business. Strange say, even in the midst of this agony of apprehension, Neapolitans thronged to the lottery-offices, eager to see favourable numbers, and muttering all the while a jangle of invocations to all the saints in the Roman Calendar, but chiefly to St. Januarius, their chosen protector. What we are about to write seems scarcely credible in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but our correspondent from Naples informs us that—'The blood of St. Januarius is said to have been boiled, and a procession was thereupon formed, in which an image was carried; so I have been told this morning.' The shocks of the earthquake were frequent at Naples, although not very intense nor of any great duration; but yet sufficiently so to inspire the inhabitants with the belief that the end of all things was at hand."

THE END.

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